Identity, authority and myth-making: Politically-motivated prisoners and the use of music during the Northern Irish conflict, 1962 - 2000

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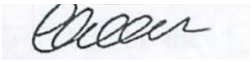
Signature: 

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Abstract.

In this study I examine the use of music by and in relation to politically-motivated prisoners in Northern Ireland, from the mid-1960s until 2000. For both republican and loyalist prisoners music was a key component in identity-construction, bonding and coping with the pains of imprisonment and demands of paramilitary life. The prison reflected the wider conflict, and the cultural struggle outside was affected by the prison context. Music boosted morale and facilitated emotional release. It provided an ideological connection between prisoners and the outside world, and had a practical function through fundraising and the gathering of other resources. Music was a means of contesting the authority of prison staff and rejecting the claims of the wider state. It played symbolic and functional roles in prisoners' campaigns for legitimacy, power and control within the prison. Music also projected a carefully constructed image of the prisoners beyond the prison, seeking to generate communal support, which reinforced prisoners' own self-image and narrative.

Fundamental themes such as bonding, defiance, self-expression and passing the time are traced and examined throughout three decades of paramilitary imprisonment. However, prisoners' musical production was not static. Shaped by paramilitary affiliation, it also responded to the different penal phases of the conflict. These included internment, Special Category Status, prison protests and their aftermath, which affected the form and content of prisoners' musical production. Prisoner-related groups on the outside were similarly affected in their use of music. The genres used by prisoners were dynamic and evolving, fusing the mainstream and the political to create a fluid, hybrid musical context which intertwined paramilitary culture with entertainment and social life. Music linked, maintained and bolstered varied and overlapping communities and identities: within the prison-based paramilitary world and in the communities outside, which the prisoners claimed to represent and upon whose support they depended.

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Acronyms.

AIL - Anti-Internment League

IBA - Independent Broadcasting Authority

INLA - Irish National Liberation Army

IRA - Irish Republican Army

IRSP - Irish Republican Socialist Party

LPA - Loyalist Prisoners' Aid

LPWA - Loyalist Prisoners' Welfare Association

LVF - Loyalist Volunteer Force

NICRA - Northern Irish Civil Rights Association

NIO - Northern Ireland Office

OC - Officer Commanding

OIRA - Official Irish Republican Army

PIRA - Provisional Irish Republican Army

POA - Prison Officers' Association

POW - Prisoner of War

RHC - Red Hand Commando

RUC - Royal Ulster Constabulary

UDA - Ulster Defence Association

UFF - Ulster Freedom Fighters

UVF - Ulster Volunteer Force

Introduction.

During a research trip for this project in 2017 I spent the 11th of July, the day before the biggest celebration in the unionist/ loyalist calendar and itself a festive occasion, on the Shankill Road, a bastion of loyalism in west Belfast. As I stopped to get my bearings outside a Rangers Supporters' Club, I noticed the lyrics "Do you want a chippy supper, Bobby Sands?" playing to the crowd in the outside drinking area, before the song transitioned into the next, *Build My Gallows*. The first hunger-striker to die in the campaign of 1981, Sands is one of the most well-known republican figures, and certainly the most well-known prisoner, to emerge from the most recent conflict. His image and songs that refer to him remain common in republican paraphernalia and cultural events. It is not surprising that a figure still revered by one side would continue to be denigrated by the other, even over thirty-five years after his death. More noteworthy was the nature of this mockery: on the one hand a striking and clear statement, it also merged with the general chatter and day-to-day sounds of a busy pub garden.

The location was significant in various other ways: this song, known as *Bobby's Anthem*, has a hostile and taunting tone, but one would struggle to think of somewhere an Irish republican would be less likely to be than a Rangers Supporters Club on the Shankill Road on the 11th of July. This was a social, festive occasion and by no means a confrontational environment, or one in which people appeared to be attempting to rouse hatred or violence. This community - loyalist, unionist, Protestant, Rangers supporters or however they would choose to identify - were playing this song for themselves and playing it for fun.

These few minutes seemed to capture the multi-faceted, inter-connected and complex nature of music relating to the Northern Irish conflict and its politically-motivated prisoners. Music and song symbolise, transmit and reinforce group identity and the bonds and divisions these

identities entail through entertainment, historical references and social life. This process is often just as directed at the constituent members of the group as their supposed enemies. This phenomenon can indicate control, authority and boundaries pertaining to a particular space, geographical area or broader social and political claims. A single figure, event or other indicator can become an almost mythical synecdoche of an entire movement or ethno-nationalist community, as revered by one as it is reviled by another. These effects do not require a planned or structured performance with a rapt audience. They are just as commonly intertwined with day-to-day life, spanning different listeners, needs, responses and levels of interest in and awareness of related political issues. This everyday element strengthens music's ability to constitute, sustain and link varied and overlapping communities with a potency and persistence which far outlasts a three-minute song or ninety-minute concert. It is these qualities that were harnessed through music both by and in relation to politically-motivated prisoners over three decades of imprisonment.

In this thesis I explore the various roles music played for and in relation to politically-motivated prisoners during the Northern Irish conflict, from the mid-1960s up to the release of the majority of such prisoners in 2000. The conflict was characterised by a struggle between cultural identities, which music represented, shaped and reinforced. The prison was a significant battleground within, even a microcosm of, the wider conflict, and music therefore played a notable part in the prison-based struggle. For both republican and loyalist prisoners music was a key component in identity-construction, bonding and coping with the pains of imprisonment and demands of paramilitary life. These practices asserted the authority and legitimacy of that identity and the political claims associated with it, while contesting those of the state and other groups. Political music's broader communal role meant it was integral to prisoners' conceptions and expressions of their ethno-nationalist community membership, as representatives and defenders of that community, and as political, rather than ordinary, prisoners. Within the prison,

access to music, in terms of records, instruments and equipment, was a marker of shifts in penal policy and protests in response to them. This affected prisoners' musical expression in both form and content, converting it into a site as well as symbol of this power struggle.

Intertwined with this more overtly political role, music functioned as entertainment, a way of passing the time, expressing emotions and representing aspects of identity outwith narrow, even claustrophobic, paramilitary culture. The republican and loyalist compounds and cell-blocks of Long Kesh/ Maze, where the majority of politically-motivated prisoners were held, did not constantly ring with the sounds of *A Nation Once Again* or *The Sash my Father Wore*, but were more reflective of the trends and tastes of the outside world. These were politically-motivated prisoners who expressed that identity through song, but also ordinary men and women, with the interests in *Top of the Pops*, rock, pop and folk music common to their age group and background. These factors were not rejected or prohibited in favour of demonstrations of political or paramilitary allegiance. Rather, they co-existed and combined with them, constituting a more modern paramilitary prisoner identity that reflected the needs, influences and tastes of contemporary inmates. The majority of prisoners had grown up during or following the youth culture boom of the 1960s, and may have had their greatest exposure to the relevant political or ethno-nationalist body of song after entering prison.

This fusion of political music with entertainment, social life and mainstream songs enhanced music's significance to and permeation of wider communities and movements related to prisoners. Political song expressed and reinforced a two-way ideological and emotional connection between prisoners and the communities they claimed to represent, and from whom they needed support, including their families. Links forged through more mainstream, albeit politically-inflected, music and social life complemented this process and widened the potential groups that could be drawn into support networks. In combining these different genres and

forms, music functioned at myriad levels to bring the prison struggle outside and the cultural struggle into the prison. Musical recordings, instruments and equipment travelled through prison walls in both directions. Events, records and song books were used to raise funds. This was aided by a broader musical and cultural periphery incorporating diaspora groups, sporting affiliations, sympathetic domestic and international political movements and mainstream artists. These phenomena varied according to paramilitary group and period, reflecting deeper differences in the respective movements' image, presentation and political positioning, as well as the distinct role of prisoners within them.

This work was undertaken as part of the Penal History Project, which has produced a series of publications focused on politically-motivated imprisonment. Led by Professor Seán McConville, the most recent publication, and second in the Ireland trilogy, *Irish Political Prisoners, 1920-1962: Pilgrimage of Desolation*, highlights various elements of the use of music by republican prisoners upon which I have tried to further explore and expand.

Literature Review

My research addresses a gap between bodies of work on politically-motivated prisoners during the Northern Irish conflict, and those dealing with the role and nature of music in that conflict. While there have been studies of aspects of these issues, there has thus far been no single study of the multi-faceted use of music by and in relation to both republican and loyalist politically motivated-prisoners over the course of the conflict. My literature review examines the key sources related to the main aspects of this thesis: politically-motivated prisoners in Northern Ireland and more universal issues of imprisonment; cultural resistance in the Northern Irish prison context; and the role of music in the wider cultural conflict in Northern Ireland.

Politically-Motivated Imprisonment: Deprivations, Identity and Adaptation.

I will show that politically-motivated prisoners used music as a means of coping with and adapting to imprisonment and its demands, whilst simultaneously contesting the legitimacy of that imprisonment. Both approaches contributed to attempts to harness the issue of imprisonment, and the prison itself, for the prisoners and their movements' own political and rhetorical purposes. These pains of imprisonment and responses to them were both specific to the Northern Irish situation, reflecting the political and ethno-nationalist issues integral to the conflict and the various stages of the penal response, and the more universal deprivations experienced by ordinary inmates. The latter have been outlined by Sykes as including the loss of liberty, goods and services, heterosexual relationships, autonomy and security.[1]

Most of the early literature on the deprivations of prison life and strategies of resisting or adapting to it is weighted towards ordinary prisoners. There were elements of prison life specific to politically-motivated prisoners in Northern Ireland that went some way to ameliorating these deprivations. Nevertheless, these prisoners also experienced the penal process in the ways set out by Sykes; they also had to decide how to cope and survive. Cohen and Taylor examine this dilemma for ordinary prisoners in Durham Prison in the early 1970s, characterised as a choice between fighting back or retreating into acceptance of their situation, and suggest that the latter option is the most common.[2] Goffman's study of total institutions, including prisons, highlights the assaults on identity such an institution may entail, and the coping or adaptive behaviours of those who have had "existence cut to the bone," a phrase that seems particularly appropriate to

[1] Sykes, Gresham M., *The Society of Captives: A Study of a Maximum Security Prison*, (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 1958), p. 64; 75; 78.
[2] Cohen, Stanley and Taylor, Laurie, *Psychological Survival: The Experience of Long-Term Imprisonment* (Middlesex: Penguin Books, 1972), p. 107; 131.

the republican protest and hunger strike period.[3] Foucault, like Goffman, examines the prison's deeply restrictive effects upon inmates' identity and autonomy.[4] Foucault presents a model of imprisonment that is all-encompassing in its repression, rather than an examination of the strategies by which prisoners attempt to protect or construct individual and collective identities and behaviours, limiting its relevance to this study.

Various means of adapting to and circumventing these attempts to strip away identity posited by Goffman can be seen in the uses of music by politically-motivated prisoners, including: "making-do" with the limited resources to hand; the use of "undercover systems of communication" and metaphorical or actual "free places," and the potentially protective effects of "strong religious and political convictions."[5] Like Goffman, Clemmer examines collective adaptations and the construction of social groups in the prison, which is key to the use of music in my work.[6] The significance of relationships outside prison walls to a prisoner's ability to adapt, explored by Clemmer and Cohen and Taylor, is also relevant to this study, as this was expressed in song.[7] Politically-motivated prisoners experienced similar problems, even though organised family support groups and wider movements affected their manifestation. Clemmer's assertion that prison "folklore" and other cultural artefacts can function as social control amongst prisoners, as well as merely expression, is key to this study of prison music, as is Cohen and Taylor's suggestion that literary or poetic pursuits related to imprisonment can construct a prisoner identity distinct from the inmate's pre-prison life.[8] Music was a means of enforcing commitment to the political struggle as well as expressing it both inside and outside prison walls. Folklore, or myth-making, surrounding prisoners, often expressed musically, was

[3] Goffman, Erving, *Asylums* (Harmondsworth, Middlesex: Pelican Books, 1961), p. 268
[4] Foucault, Michel, *Discipline and Punish: The Birth of the Prison*, (London: Penguin Books, 1977)
[5] Ibid., p. 187; pp. 203 - 210; p. 65.
[6] Clemmer, Donald, *The Prison Community*, (New York: Holt, Rinehart and Winston, 1958), pp. 83 - 134.
[7] Clemmer, 1958, p. 83; Cohen and Taylor, 1972, p. 68.
[8] Clemmer, pp. 172 - 176; Cohen and Taylor, p. 74.

also a potent aspect of the tightly-controlled social context in which prisoners' families and wider communities often lived.

Politically-Motivated Prisoners in Northern Ireland.

As paramilitary prisoners there was a constant obligation to reject and contest the requirements and regulations of the prison regime. The struggle for political status dominated Northern Irish penal affairs for most of the conflict. It is thus a key theme of related music. The campaign for political recognition reflected different penal phases of the conflict. These phases have been most clearly outlined by Gormally, McEvoy and Wall, as ""reactive containment" (1969-76), "criminalization" (1976-81), and "normalization" (1981 onward)," and were significant for practical differences in access to musical equipment and the role of music as adaptation strategy and tool of antagonism and defiance.[9] McCleery's study of internment provides useful detail on that aspect of the reactive containment phase.[10] Other work on the changes in prison life entailed by these different periods, particularly McAtackney on the layout and spatial aspects of the Long Kesh compounds and H-Blocks of the Maze, provides useful context for considerations of musical expression.[11] Kenney and Von Tangen Page are instructive on paramilitary attitudes to imprisonment and the significance of political status, as well as the use of education and other means of controlling "the narrative of one's own incarceration", particularly amongst republicans.[12]

[9] Gormally, Brian, McEvoy, Kieran and Wall, David, 'Criminal Justice in a Divided Society: Northern Ireland Prisons,' *Crime and Justice*, Vol. 17 (1993) 51-135, p. 52.
[10] McCleery, Martin J., *Operation Demetrius and its Aftermath: A new history of the use of internment without trial in Northern Ireland, 1971 - 75*, (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 2015)
[11] McAtackney, Laura, *An Archaeology of the Troubles: The dark heritage of Long Kesh/ Maze Prison*, (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2014)
[12] Kenney, Padraic, *Dance in Chains: Political Imprisonment in the Modern World*, (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2017), p. 6; Von Tangen Page, Michael, *Prisons, Peace and Terrorism: Penal Policy and the Reduction of Political Violence in Northern Ireland, Italy and the Spanish Basque Country*, 1968 - 97, (Hampshire: Macmillan Press, 1998)

More general histories of the conflict and its paramilitary groups are informative regarding the role of the prison and prisoners in their wider movements.[13] McConville's *Irish Political Prisoners, 1920 – 1962: Pilgrimage of Desolation* contains instructive analysis on similar issues in the period preceding that examined here, including the use of music as both entertainment and rebellion by republican prisoners.[14] Crawford provides a useful perspective on loyalists and the struggle for political status, an issue far less documented than the republican experience. This book is also a notable resource on wider issues of imprisonment, such as relationships, identity and the differences between compound and H-Block life due to interviews with former republican, loyalist and ordinary prisoners.[15]

Music used for entertainment or expressing personal and emotional issues is not in contrast to more active resistance, i.e. antagonising staff or refusing orders, but rather could contribute to prisoners' emotional survival and thus aid them in continuing their campaigns. All uses of prison music can be classed, to varying degrees, as part of the category identified by McEvoy as "hidden or less overt forms of resistance such as the education of prisoners, political and military classes, the learning of Irish, the decoration of prison wings in paramilitary and political iconography [which] have also formed part of the armoury of paramilitary prisoners in Northern Ireland over the period of the conflict."[16] McEvoy distinguishes between this form of resistance

[13] Taylor, Peter, *Provos: The IRA and Sinn Fein* (London: Bloomsbury, 1998); Taylor, Peter, *Loyalists*, (London: Bloomsbury, 1999); English, Richard, *Armed Struggle: The History of the IRA*, (London: Pan Macmillan, 2003); Moloney, Ed, *A Secret History of the IRA*, (London: Penguin, 2002); Crawford, Colin, *Inside the UDA: Volunteers and Violence*, (London: Pluto Press, 2003); Wood, Ian S., *Crimes of Loyalty: A History of the UDA* (Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Press, 2006); Edwards, Aaron, *UVF: Behind the Mask*, (Newbridge: Merrion Press, 2017)

[14] McConville, Seán, *Irish Political Prisoners, 1920 – 1962: Pilgrimage of Desolation*, (London: Routledge, 2014), pp. 37 - 39; p. 898.

[15] Crawford, Colin, *Defenders or Criminals: Loyalist prisoners and criminalisation*, (Belfast: Blackstaff Press, 1999)

[16] McEvoy, Kieran, *Paramilitary Imprisonment in Northern Ireland: Resistance, Management and Release* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2001), pp. 33 - 34.

and the four categories on which his book focuses, that is: "escape; dirty protest/hunger strike; violence; attitudes towards and usage of law."[17] I contend that this cultural resistance, including music, was sufficiently prevalent and substantial to be considered a fifth category in its own right. Outside prison walls, less overt subversion has been examined by de Certeau.[18] This is of limited relevance here as much of prisoners' use of music and noise was intended to be received and understood by its targets, although certain practices, like the use of bin lids to transmit messages about prisoners or the appropriation of popular lyrics, are examples of "everyday tools manipulated by users."[19]

Cultural Resistance in the Northern Irish Prison Context.

There is a well-developed, albeit mostly republican-focused, body of literature on general resistance in the Northern Irish prison context, including the work of McEvoy cited above, Feldman's analysis of the body as a site of violence, and Aretxaga's work on similar issues through a gendered lens.[20] Both highlight the prison's crucial place in the wider conflict, and Feldman's more in-depth study incorporates the role of the voice and its collective use in expressions of both domination and subversion.[21] Physical violence is not the focus of this thesis, but violent incidents were often the catalyst for more hostile, confrontational uses of song. They shaped the self-conception of and bonds between the prisoners, as well as campaigns on the outside, which contributed to both the prisoners' use of music and their representation in it. Rolston and McKeown provide insightful analysis, not least due to McKeown's status as a

[17] Ibid., p. 23.
[18] De Certeau, Michel, *The Practice of Everyday Life*, (Berkeley, CA: University of California Press, 1988)
[19] Ibid., p. 21.
[20] Feldman, Allen, *Formations of Violence: The Narrative of the Body and Political Terror in Northern Ireland*, (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1991); Aretxaga, Begoña, 'Dirty Protest: Symbolic Overdetermination and Gender in Northern Ireland Ethnic Violence,' *Ethos*, Vol. 23, No. 2 (Jun., 1995), 123-148.
[21] Feldman, pp. 210 – 217.

former republican prisoner, on the role of violence in republican prison culture, and related conceptions of masculinity which are relevant to many prisoner-related songs.[22] They argue solidarity was based upon prisoners' ability to endure and withstand violence and, while this solidarity was beneficial to prisoners, overtly emotional displays could be a sign of weakness, a cultural tenet that limited prisoners' self-expression. This analysis contributes to my argument that the political musical canon simultaneously inculcated restrictive values, such as the primacy of endurance over expressing fear or sadness, and could provide a rare sanctioned emotional outlet for potentially problematic feelings in an otherwise repressive context. This point builds on the emergent literature on the history of emotions, particularly definitions of emotional regimes and outlets in Reddy, as well as analysis of the relationship between music and emotions by Rosenwein.[23]

McKeown and Rolston's article is unusual in republican-focused literature for analysing potential downsides of republican prison culture for prisoners. Feldman and Aretxaga highlight the horrendous physical conditions of the dirty protest, but lean towards a sympathetic view of the prisoners' courage and defiance rather than an acknowledgement of the personal cost at which it might have come. Like Rolston and McKeown, O'Hearn highlights the cyclical nature of violent treatment creating solidarity, which begets more confrontation with the authorities, and states that "one should neither romanticize nor downplay the extreme violence that can occur alongside and in opposition to collective resistance."[24] Despite this concern, I argue that he romanticises the collective resistance of prisoners, alongside the status of Bobby Sands in

[22] Rolston, Bill and McKeown, Laurence, 'Male Republican Prisoners in Northern Ireland: Resistance, Emotions and Homosociality,' *State Crime Journal*, Vol. 6, No. 2 (Autumn 2017), 265-285.
[23] Reddy, William M., *The Navigation of Feeling* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2001), pp. 126 - 129; Rosenwein, Barbara H., 'Worrying about Emotions in History,' *The American Historical Review*, Vol. 107, No. 3 (June 2002), 821-845.
[24] O'Hearn, Denis, 'Repression and Solidary Cultures of Resistance: Irish Political Prisoners on Protest', *American Journal of Sociology*, Vol. 115, No. 2 (September 2009), 491-526, p. 520.

particular, without reference to the extreme violence inherent to paramilitary life and practice. O'Hearn's article is useful for its detail on republican prison cultural production, including songs, and their role in wider resistance, but presents a picture of the penal situation and wider conflict that lacks balance.

Like O'Hearn, Whalen and, to a lesser degree, Lloyd have addressed the musical production and expression of republican prisoners, the former with a particular focus on Sands.[25] Whalen's article '"*I Wish I Was Back Home in Derry,": Songs Composed in the H Blocks and the Paradox of Exile*,' is the most detailed examination of Northern Irish political prison music I have found. It is a valuable foundation for many of the issues which I address, including the use of popular music, the difficulties of recording songs written in prison on the outside, and the wider contribution of music to republican prisoner identity. His work on republican prison writing is informative on lyrical and literary pieces from both a textual analysis perspective, and in examining those texts' engagement with issues such as relationships. While the textual detail and historical context is comprehensive, there is little interrogation of why republican prisoners present themselves in a certain manner in their songs and texts regarding their audience, nor the various wider uses of these songs and their myth-making around figures like Sands. O'Hearn's biography of Sands is likewise a key resource for anecdotes on the varied musical culture of republican life in Long Kesh/ Maze, but is similarly absent any broader analysis.[26] Hopkins' work on memoir writing and presentations of the prison protests in the republican movement's "shaping the historical narrative" and modern image-construction provides a key perspective

[25] Whalen, Lachlan, *Contemporary Irish Republican Prison Writing: Writing and Resistance* (New York, NY: Palgrave Macmillan, 2007); Whalen, Lachlan, '"I Wish I Was Back Home in Derry,": Songs Composed in the H Blocks and the Paradox of Exile,' in *Irish Migrants in New Communities: Seeking the Fair Land?* Ó hAodha, Mícheál and Ó Catháin, Máirtín (Eds.), (Maryland: Lexington Books, 2014), 131 – 145; Lloyd, David, *Irish Culture and Colonial Modernity, 1800 - 2000: The Transformation of Oral Space* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2011)
[26] O'Hearn, Denis, *Bobby Sands: Nothing But an Unfinished Song*, (London: Pluto Press, 2006)

here: while he does not address music, many republican memoirs do, and it is necessary to consider why and how.[27] More broadly, songs are also key to this harnessing and moulding of history and the authority it is intended to suggest.

Lloyd, writing on the nature of oral culture and space in Irish history, expressly identifies "the oral community" as a measure taken "against the deprivations of the prison regime," linking this issue to penal theory much more explicitly than Whalen.[28] This work is notable for its critique of the tendency of H-Block literature to focus either "on the contemporary conditions of the struggle" or "foreground the long history of Republican prison protest and understand the H-Block campaign as an extension of that earlier history," citing O'Malley and Feldman as culprits of the latter.[29] However, Lloyd appears to fall into this same trap with regards to H-Block music, song and story-telling, examining its history and historical themes but overlooking the influence of modern, mainstream music, which Whalen and O'Hearn incorporate. O'Malley, criticised by Lloyd as overly fixated on the "mythical" elements of the republican hunger strikes of the early 1980s, is a valuable source on the significance of the campaign for the prisoners and their communities outside, particularly on the identity issues it raised, many of which are found in related music.[30] Beresford's *Ten Men Dead* contains myriad references to song in the H-Blocks, although not always with clear sources.[31] Hennessey's work also contains a wide range of relevant sources on the hunger strike, particularly relating to the government and prison

[27] Hopkins, Stephen, 'The Chronicles of Long Kesh: Provisional Irish Republican memoirs and the contested memory of the hunger strikes,' *Memory Studies*, 2014, Vol. 7(4), 425-439, p. 428; Hopkins, Stephen, *The Politics of Memoir and the Northern Ireland Conflict,* (Liverpool: Liverpool University Press, 2013)
[28] Lloyd, p. 196.
[29] Lloyd, p. 122 - 123.
[30] O'Malley, Padraig, *Biting at the Grave: The Irish Hunger Strikes and the Politics of Despair*, (Boston: Beacon Press, 1990).
[31] Beresford, David, *Ten Men Dead*, (London: HarperCollins, 1987)

authorities.[32] An examination of the popular campaign against criminalisation is provided by Ross, including informative detail on fund-raising and mobilisation, and reference to the album *H-Block.*[33]

Shirlow and McEvoy's interview-based work on loyalist and republican former prisoners has proved highly significant for this research.[34] The study contains suggestions that imprisonment was transformative in building a sense of political and ethno-nationalist identity amongst prisoners, particularly republicans, who had previously been equally if not more influenced by general popular culture.[35] It is also instructive on various other aspects of prisoners' experience, including fundraising and wider social and political standing, which are relevant to the functions of music.

There is a far greater body of work on the imprisonment of men, mostly at Long Kesh/ Maze, than of the women held at Armagh and later Maghaberry (within which references to loyalist women are even fewer). Corcoran's study of Armagh, drawing upon works by Clemmer, Sykes and Goffman, provides invaluable insight into the comparatively far less-researched area of cultural practices amongst female politically-motivated prisoners, including their use of music.[36] Republican women's experience of politically-motivated imprisonment is also examined by Dowler, giving context to how those women felt they were seen by their movement, a significant influence on identity-construction.[37]

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[32] Hennessey, Thomas, *Hunger strike: Margaret Thatcher's battle with the IRA, 1980-81,* (Sallins, Co. Kildare: Irish Academic Press, 2014)
[33] Ross, F. Stuart, *Smashing H-Block: The Rise and Fall of the Popular Campaign Against Criminalization, 1976 - 1982,* (Liverpool: Liverpool University Press, 2011)
[34] Shirlow, Peter and McEvoy, Kieran, *Beyond the Wire: Former Prisoners and Conflict Transformation in Northern Ireland,* (London: Pluto Press, 2008)
[35] Ibid., pp. 144 - 145.
[36] Corcoran, Mary S., *Out of Order: The Political Imprisonment of Women in Northern Ireland, 1972 - 1998,* (Devon: Willan Publishing, 2006)
[37] Dowler, Lorraine, 'The Mother of All Warriors: Women in West Belfast, Northern Ireland', in Ronit Lentin (Ed.), *Gender and Catastrophe,* (London: Zed Books, 1997), 77 - 91.

There is a useful body of literature on other cultural production and practices in the Northern Irish prison context, including Rolston's examination of murals by both sets of paramilitaries, Mac Ionnrachtaigh's authoritative work on the mostly republican use of the Irish language, as well as references to prisoners' reading, prose writing and education in many of the texts cited above.[38] McAtackney's study addresses handicrafts produced by prisoners, which are also examined by Hinson specifically in relation to UVF and RHC inmates.[39] Discussion of these different practices is instructive on music through the common themes they raise, particularly the use of symbols of identity to dominate, manipulate or otherwise engage with the prison environs. They also suggest differences which point to the unique roles and abilities of music.

Music, Community and Cultural Identity.

Various texts incorporate references to prisoner-related music on the outside. This is usually a brief part of wider cultural analysis, rather than a central theme of the work. Burton's ethnography of a "Belfast working-class Catholic community" in the early 1970s, analysed under the pseudonym Anro, is an extremely useful investigation into the wider social setting of many prisoners.[40] Its implication that imprisonment was enmeshed with communities such as this, through republican songs, prison-made handicrafts, prisoner welfare funds and other factors is particularly relevant. This study is especially valuable regarding the communal effects of

[38] Rolston, Bill, 'Prison as a Liberated Zone: The Murals of Long Kesh, Northern Ireland,' *State Crime Journal*, Vol. 2, No. 2 (Autumn 2013), 49-67; Mac Ionnrachtaigh, Feargal, *Language, Resistance and Revival: Republican Prisoners and the Irish Language in the North of Ireland* (London: Pluto Press, 2013)
[39] Hinson, Erin, 'Crafting Identities: Prison artefacts and place-making in pre- and post-ceasefire Northern Ireland', in Komarova, Milena and Maruška Svašek (Eds.), *Ethnographies of movement, sociality and space: Place-making in the new Northern Ireland* (New York, NY: Berghahn Books, 2018), 60-84.
[40] Burton, Frank, *The Politics of Legitimacy: Struggles in a Belfast Community*, (London: Routledge & Kegan Paul Ltd., 1978)

internment. Writing following the prison protests, Fairweather et al present similar indications of this blurring of the domestic and the carceral, including through music.[41]

The effects of imprisonment upon prisoners and their families is examined by Rolston and Tomlinson, touching upon a number of points mentioned above, including the pains of imprisonment and the use of handicrafts, the Irish language and education to adapt to them.[42] This text is useful for its dual focus on prison life and related communal and domestic issues, which is relevant to musical themes and functions. *Time Stands Still: The Forgotten Stories of Prisoners Families*, is another notable resource on this aspect of politically-motivated imprisonment, especially since it draws on interviews with both republican and loyalist families.[43] Other sources, including by Clarke and Frampton, do not directly address music, but have relevant implications.[44] These texts are instructive on how cultural, communal and political ties were constituted and mobilised around prisoners, factors which also came to bear on the use of music.

Political music that appears in source material regarding prisoners comprises longer-standing, historical pieces and contemporaneous compositions. Zimmermann, Faolain and Fitzgibbon and Mulcahy provide a grounding in the lyrics and historical context of various older pieces that remain popular, and many that do not, mostly in the republican canon but with some attention to

[41] Fairweather, Eileen, Roisín McDonough and Melanie McFadyean, *Only the Rivers Run Free: Northern Ireland: The Women's War*, (London: Pluto Press, 1984)
[42] Rolston, Bill and Tomlinson, Mike, "Long-Term Imprisonment in Northern Ireland: Psychological or Political Survival?", *The Expansion of European Prison Systems*, Rolston, Bill and Tomlinson, Mike, (Eds.), (Belfast: The European Group for the Study of Deviance and Social Control, 1986)
[43] *Time Stands Still: The Forgotten Stories of Prisoners Families*, (Newtownabbey: Island Publications / Farset Community Think Tanks Project, 2010)
[44] Clarke, Liam, *Broadening the Battlefield: The H-Blocks and the Rise of Sinn Féin*, (Dublin: Gill and Macmillan, 1987); Frampton, Martyn, *The Long March: The Political Strategy of Sinn Féin, 1981 - 2007*, (London: Palgrave Macmillan, 2009)

loyalist, unionist or "Orange" songs.[45] Zimmermann outlines various pre-1900 trends that remain prevalent in political songs of the recent conflict, including celebration and agitation, a tendency to borrow tunes, and the fact that the criteria for a "rebel" song may be elusive but is widely understood.[46] Zimmermann's position that the two political canons are not as distinct as their adherents might suggest informs Vallely's more recent work on the subject, which argues that the recent conflict has contributed to retrospective division and exclusion in definitions and performance of of Irish music.[47]

This work on long-standing republican themes is built upon with regard to the modern conflict by McCann and subsequently Boyle, who set out various features of the republican canon, particularly the "hero-martyr" trope and other representations of the 1981 hunger strikers.[48] Millar's studies on republican music during the conflict and into post-conflict society are extremely useful, including his detailed analysis of less-explored aspects such as the importance, or lack thereof, of intervention by non-local musical artists, use of cover art and other visuals, the coercive emotional effects of rebel music and the performativity of such songs.[49] This research incorporates a significant number of references to music by and in relation to prisoners, and wider themes that influence that category.

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[45] Georges-Denis, Zimmermann, *Songs of Irish Rebellion Political Street Ballads and Rebel Songs, 1780 - 1900*, (Dublin: Allen Figgis, 1967); Faolain, Turlough, *Blood on the Harp: Irish Rebel History in Ballad (The Heritage)*, (Troy, NY: The Whitston Publishing Company, 1983); Mulcahy, Michael and Fitzgibbon, Marie, *The Voice of the People: Songs and History of Ireland*, (Dublin: O'Brien Press, 1982)

[46] Zimmermann, p. 10.

[47] Vallely, Fintan, *Tuned Out: Traditional music and identity in Northern Ireland*, (Cork: Cork University Press, 2008)

[48] McCann, Mary, *The past in the present: a study of some aspects of the politics of music in Belfast*, (unpublished doctoral thesis, Queen's University Belfast, 1985); Boyle, Mark, "Edifying the Rebellious Gael: uses of memories of Ireland's troubled past among the West of Scotland's Irish Catholic diaspora," *Celtic Geographies: Old Culture, New Times*, Harvey, David C. et al (Ed.), (London: Routledge, 2002), 173-191.

[49] Millar, Stephen Robert, *Sounding Dissent: Music, Resistance and Irish Republicanism in Belfast*, 1964-2016 (unpublished doctoral thesis, Queen's University Belfast, 2017); Millar, Stephen, 'Irish republican music and (post)colonial schizophrenia', *Popular Music and Society*, 2017, 40(1), 75-88; Millar, Stephen R., 'Music is my AK-47: Performing resistance in Belfast's rebel music scene,' *Journal of the Royal Anthropological Institute*, 2018, 24, 348-365.

Material on the republican movement generally, including its prisoners, cultural practices and music, is far more prevalent than that on loyalism. Studies of loyalist or unionist music tend to focus on band and parading culture, including that by Bryan and Jarman on Orange parades; MacDonald's ethnography of a so-called "blood and thunder" band in the post-conflict period; Radford's similar study of the role of women in these bands; and the various references to music in Ruth Dudley Edwards' study of the loyal institutions.[50] These studies provide useful background on the most prominent musical expression of loyalist culture. That culture was imported into prison, where inmates would make their own approximations of band regalia, instruments and hold "parades." While connections between bands and general paramilitary culture appear in these sources, any references to prisoners is limited and incidental.

Mulvenna's work on loyalism and tartan gangs is more directly relevant to my work as it addresses the development of loyalist paramilitary culture in the 1960s and 1970s. It focuses particularly on gangs and other elements of youth culture and social life, including music, fashion and football.[51] While it is not centred on prisons, there are references to songs about prominent loyalist prisoners such as Gusty Spence. The greater number of memoirs by, and biographies of, republican prisoners means there are far more references to republican figures' youth, adolescence and related social practices than their loyalist counterparts. This source is therefore highly useful for its interviews and anecdotes. Like the work of Millar and McCann, it

[50] Bryan, Dominic, *Orange Parades*, (London: Pluto Press, 2000); Jarman, Neil, *Material Conflicts: Parades and Visual Displays* in Northern Ireland, (Oxford: Berg, 1997); MacDonald, Darach, *Blood and Thunder: Inside an Ulster Protestant Band* (Cork: Mercier Press, 2010); Radford, Katy, "Drum rolls and gender roles in Protestant marching bands in Belfast", *British Journal of Ethnomusicology*, Vol. 10, No. 2 (2001), 37-59; Dudley Edwards, Ruth, *The Faithful Tribe*, (London: HarperCollins, 2009)
[51] Mulvenna, Gareth, *Tartan Gangs and Paramilitaries: The Loyalist Backlash*, (Liverpool: Liverpool University Press, 2016)

is also valuable for its local focus and detail on the social context from which many involved in the paramilitary and musical world addressed in my study came.

Useful analysis is also provided by Wilson's study of loyalist music, particularly the influence of the country and western genre.[52] Rolston's examination of loyalist identity through its modern musical expression is similarly useful.[53] Both Wilson and Rolston address the wider culture surrounding loyalist music, particularly the social aspects and the ways such music was distributed, including via song books and CDs. These factors are key to understanding the entertainment value inherent in such music, which makes it integral to socio-cultural life rather than a political obligation. Rolston links loyalism's musical identity with its prisoners, highlighting songs written inside prison and the emotional responses prison-themed songs can elicit in prisoners' families.[54] These are relatively brief references, dealing with issues upon which I will expand.

The comparative scarcity of sources on the loyalist prisoner experience necessitates the use of sources with a broader focus on unionist or loyalist identity. Miller's exploration of the conditional nature of loyalty is especially informative.[55] Shirlow and McGovern's *Who Are the People?* analyses a number of key issues, including how loyalists are perceived, siege mentality and the diverse, heterogeneous nature of "Protestant" identities.[56] This latter point, also suggested by Vallely, raises the issue of invented or imagined traditions, bonds and shared

[52] Wilson, David A., 'Ulster Loyalism and Country Music, 1969 - 85,' Wolfe, Charles K. and Akerson, James E., (Eds.), Country Music Goes to War, (Lexington, KY: University Press of Kentucky, 2005), 192-207.
[53] Rolston, Bill, "Music and Politics in Ireland: The Case of Loyalism," Harrington, John P. and Mitchell, Elizabeth J. (Eds), *Politics and Performance in Contemporary Northern Ireland* (Amherst, MT: University of Massachusetts Press, 1999), 29-56.
[54] Rolston, 1999, pp. 29 - 30; pp. 42 - 43.
[55] Miller, D.W., *Queen's Rebels: Ulster Loyalism in Historical Perspective*, (Dublin: University College Dublin Press, 2007)
[56] Shirlow, Peter and McGovern, Mark (Eds.), *Who Are 'The People'? Unionism, Protestantism and Loyalism in Northern Ireland*, (London: Pluto Press, 1997)

identities that are transmitted and reinforced through music. This is a phenomenon in republican and loyalist cultural expression on which Hobsbawm and Anderson are instructive, in conjunction with literature on the history of emotions.[57] This transmission of shared traditions, myths and values is enhanced by music's ability to act on the brain and body, as explored in terms of psychology and physiology by Levitin and, from a more collective, social viewpoint, Attali and Balliger.[58] Regarding the use of history and its interaction with modern tensions, it has been useful to examine literature on the context of the 1960s, particularly the relevance of anniversaries, communal insecurity and the civil rights movement to the beginning of the conflict.[59]

Along with the political genres, popular, mainstream styles were also translated into paramilitary and prison life, references to which appear in prisoners' memoirs and work mentioned above by Whalen, O'Hearn and Shirlow and McEvoy. There is a useful body of literature on political aspects of popular music in Northern Ireland. The most relevant of this category, by Rolston, Pietzonka and Bailie, include examples of prison music and prisoner-related music on the outside, although these are not the focus of the texts.[60] Punk music as a possible "third way,"

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[57] Hobsbawm, Eric and Ranger, Terence (Eds.), *The Invention of Tradition* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1983); Anderson, Benedict, *Imagined Communities: Reflections on the Origin and Spread of Nationalism*, (London: Verso, 1983)

[58] Levitin, Daniel J., *This is Your Brain on Music*, (Penguin: New York, 2006); Attali, Jacques, *Noise: The Political Economy of Music*, (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 1985); Balliger, Robin, "Sounds of Resistance," in Sakolsky, Ron and Wei-Han Ho, Fred (Eds), *Sounding Off! Music as Subversion/ Resistance/ Revolution*, (New York: Autonomedia, 1995), 13-26.

[59] O'Callaghan, Margaret, 'The Past Never Stands Still: Commemorating the Easter Rising in 1966 and 1976,' *Remembering the Troubles: Contesting the Recent Past in Northern Ireland*, Ed. Jim Smith, (Notre Dame, IN: University of Notre Dame Press, 2017), 115-141; Beiner, Guy, "Between Trauma and Triumphalism: The Easter Rising, the Somme, and the Crux of Deep Memory in Modern Ireland" in *Journal of British Studies*, Vol. 46, No. 2 (April 2007), 366-389; Mulholland, Marc, *Northern Ireland at the Crossroads: Ulster Unionism in the O'Neill Years, 1960-9*, (Basingstoke, Hampshire: Macmillan, 2000); Prince, Simon, *Northern Ireland's '68: Civil Rights, Global Revolt and the Origins of The Troubles*, (Dublin: Irish Academic Press, 2007)

[60] Rolston, Bill, "'This is not a Rebel Song': The Irish Conflict and Popular Music," *Race & Class*, 2001; 42; 49, 49-67; Pietzonka, Katrin, *And the Healing Has Begun...: A Musical Journey towards Peace in*

freeing young people from sectarian concerns, has been examined in particular detail by McLoone and Martínez.[61] It was also instructive to look at the work of Kent as well as Johnson and Cloonan on "unpeaceful music" and the capacity for popular, supposedly apolitical music, to be commandeered for hostile or destabilising purposes.[62] This is a useful counterpoint to the view that popular or entertaining music is mostly a force for bringing people together, a prevalent theme in Pietzonka's work in particular. That this is often not the case in Northern Ireland, inside and outside the prison, is demonstrated by Johnson and Cloonan.

These texts provide a robust intellectual foundation for the various strands of this study. There is clearly a gap in the literature in terms of a comprehensive analysis of the use of music and song by prisoners on both sides, and how this interacted with and was shaped by musical practices in the outside world. Building on the work cited above, I have attempted to address prison music's full range of functions, from getting by to actively resisting the demands of imprisonment and contesting the authority of the state, specific to the various penal phases of the Northern Irish conflict. Music and song are understood as both symbols and enforcers of collective and individual identity. They can produce the most personal, private emotions as well as broad networks, and mobilise them for a variety of practical, ideological and cultural purposes. Politically-motivated offending and imprisonment, and the expression of cultural identity through music, were significant features of the Northern Irish conflict: in examining their intersection, I seek to contribute to the greater understanding of both.

Northern Ireland, (Bloomington: AuthorHouse, 2013); Bailie, Stuart, *Trouble Songs: Music and Conflict in Northern Ireland* (Belfast: Bloomfield Press, 2018)

[61] Martínez, Robert, 'Punk Rock, Thatcher, and the Elsewhere of Northern Ireland: Rethinking the Politics of Popular Music,' *The Journal of the Midwest Modern Language Association*, Vol. 48, No. 1 (Spring 2015), 193-219; McLoone, Martin, 'Punk Music in Northern Ireland: The Political Power of 'What Might Have Been',' *Irish Studies Review*, Vol. 12, No. 1, 2004, 29-38, p. 36.

[62] Kent, George, "Unpeaceful Music", in *Music and Conflict Transformation: Harmonies and Dissonances in Geopolitics*, Urbain, Oliver (Ed.), (London: I.B. Tauris, 2008), 104-111; Johnson, Bruce and Cloonan, Martin, *Dark Side of the Tune: Popular Music and Violence*, (Aldershot: Ashgate, 2008)

Methodology.

Research Methods.

This work has been predominantly qualitative, based on archival research and textual analysis, and drawing upon the various theoretical considerations I have set out. The principal archives were the Linen Hall Library Political Collection, the Public Record Office of Northern Ireland and the newspaper collection of the British Library. I conducted supplementary research at the National Archives of the United Kingdom, the Archive of the Irish in Britain and the Cardinal Ó Fiaich Memorial Library and Archive. Source material used includes song books, LPs, CDs, leaflets, correspondence, community publications, local and national newspapers, audiovisual clips, dedicated collections such as *The Journal of Prisoners on Prison*, and other ephemera. The majority of song books, leaflets and other ephemera cited is held at the Linen Hall Library. Relevant statutes, parliamentary debates and reports have been consulted. I have also visited various institutions with collections of paramilitary-related cultural paraphernalia, including the Andy Tyrie Interpretive Centre and the Eileen Hickey Irish Republican History Museum (both in Belfast), and the Ex-Prisoners Outreach Programme in Derry/Londonderry.[63] The guidance of the Penal History Project and its annual Project Advisory Committee meeting has provided invaluable context and steering throughout the research process.

Textual analysis of song lyrics composed by or about prisoners can provide insights into the various emotional and political functions these songs played. The song books, lyric sheets and songs carried by publications held at the various archives and libraries I have listed has allowed comparison of republican and loyalist pieces and the search for recurring themes within the

[63] Following the convention used in McConville's Penal History Project publications, I will endeavour to use the terms "Derry" and "Londonderry" approximately equally throughout the rest of this thesis.

respective canons. I have endeavoured not to treat these sources as isolated lyrics in the sense of poetry or other literary writing. For my purposes they have been part of a combination of elements that contribute to a piece's effect, including tune, instrumentation, where and when it is sung or performed and by whom. Recordings and audiovisual material are extremely useful for these non-textual features, along with prisoners' memoirs and the greater context surrounding the use of music these can provide. Ephemera sources, including programmes from concerts inside the prison, have also been helpful. Analysis of other features of song books, texts or recordings contributes to a wider understanding of their role in prisoner-related culture, including but not limited to album artwork, liner notes and distribution considerations.

Note on sources.

Prisoners' memoirs and other presentations of their prison experience has been one of my richest sources of references to their musical tastes, practices and related cultural attitudes. This source material has raised two separate, but not unrelated, issues: as with secondary sources, there is a greater availability of material related to republicanism than loyalism; and these recollections are, for the most part, written with a clear agenda and ideological framework. In order to address the former, I have attempted to complement the few loyalist prisoner-generated texts with as much audiovisual, ephemera and secondary material as possible, although a certain asymmetry has been inevitable.

The issue of the narrative(s) presented by prisoners' memoirs and recollections, and indeed by related recordings, publications and collections, is more complex. As with many violent cultural and political struggles, loyalism and republicanism, and different tendencies within them, have attempted to construct a certain impression of events, figures and other themes in order to maintain momentum, and reinforce broader moral and political claims of authority and

legitimacy. I contend that music has been and remains a key force in the promotion and persistence of these narratives. Regarding prisoners' recollections of music, as distinct from the music itself, this image-control takes various forms, including but not limited to: references to musical tastes and talent which imply broader qualities about an individual's character and virtue; a focus on collective use of music and performance to suggest a monolithic solidarity, shared identity and, by extension, political strength and support; and attempts to legitimise or delegitimise the wider claims, power and authority of political movements or identity groups through veneration or denigration of associated music. Music harnessed in this fashion is one of the central focuses of my research and identified throughout. It is important to stress that the proliferation of former prisoners' memoirs, anecdotes and similar source material in this work does not indicate that they are taken as objective reporting, but rather examined as constituent parts of wider myth-making, identity-construction and narrative control in a context that remains highly disputed.

Interviews.

The conflict in Northern Ireland has generated a voluminous body of oral history. I decided not to undertake the considerable task of conducting formal interviews, in part due to the wealth of references to music and song that can be gleaned from previous research. There are, moreover, considerations specific to the current Northern Irish context which I felt limited the practicality and potential benefits of formal interviews, and which became clear as I approached contacts for informal discussions and information gathering. As I am not from nor based in Northern Ireland, at the beginning of this project I was reliant on ex-prisoner groups or individuals who could be introduced to me by academic contacts, rather than my own organic relationships. Many provided valuable context in informal conversations but, being experienced contacts, they had

either already formally contributed to academic research or decided they did not want to, making an official interview either not possible or of limited use.

As I began to make more contacts from both a snowballing effect and visiting events and community facilities in Northern Ireland, I observed that, despite a willingness to talk in person and off the record, there was a reluctance to become formally involved with an academic project. One person cancelled a scheduled interview following a reference to university guidelines. I would conjecture that this reticence reflects concerns over confidentiality and legal repercussions sparked by incidents such as the 2014 arrests of certain figures following interviews by Boston College. It may also simply be a result of the passing of time since the period upon which my research focuses, and an increasing desire amongst many people to establish distance from its events.

Structure.

The dissertation that follows begins by outlining the background to the use of political music during the conflict. I first address the role of music in the construction and transmission of ethno-nationalist identity in Northern Ireland up to the early years of the conflict, including its relationship to public disorder and legal responses, and political music's interaction with popular music and wider social life. The following three chapters examine how these broader social forces interacted with the penal context to shape paramilitary prisoners' use of music, following the chronological phases outlined by Gormally et al.[64] Chapter Two examines music in the prison during the years of "reactive containment," described as "a military-style response of suppression combined with negotiation that treats inmates as prisoners of war," from the

[64] Gormally et al, p. 52.

introduction of internment in 1971 until the phasing out of Special Category Status from March 1976.[65]

In Chapter Three, I explore how the functions of prisoners' music use established in the preceding chapter were affected by the period of "criminalization," that is, the decision to treat politically-motivated prisoners as ordinary inmates, and particularly the protests of 1976-1981 that followed.[66] Chapter Four traces the use of music by paramilitary prisoners in the period following the end of the 1981 hunger strike through to the release of the majority in 2000. This phase was characterised by an approach that "treats division and a certain level of violence as commonplace" and "seeks to minimize conflict within the prisons," in the aftermath of the extreme tension of the prior five years.[67] Finally, in Chapter Five I explore the various corresponding ways music in the outside world was utilised to construct, link and motivate aspects of communal identity around the prisoner issue, from 1971 until the releases of the peace process.

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[65] Ibid., p. 51.
[66] Ibid., p. 51.
[67] Ibid., p. 51.

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Chapter One: The background to the cultural manifestation of the Northern Irish conflict.

The political aims of the violence in Northern Ireland between the mid-1960s and late 1990s were inextricably interwoven with the struggle over cultural identity, recognition and legitimacy between two distinct, albeit not internally monolithic, communities. Cultural expression was a battleground in itself, in terms of restrictions, censorship and communal antagonism. It was also a means of transmitting the traditions, values and historical narrative that maintained and mobilised commitment to, and identification with, the broader ethno-nationalist group. Music was integral to this expression, and conflict, for both sides, through lyrical exposition and the capacity for instruments, rhythm and other sonic effects to rouse emotional and physiological responses. Communities were bonded together and divided from one another through political music, and the medium was adept at defining the group's limits and linking its members across generations and physical distance.

Many politically-motivated prisoners imported these issues and practices into the prison, where they were shaped, shared and sharpened by the penal context. The prison was a microcosm, and at times driving force, of the conflict, and prisoners were thus subject to, as well as participants in, the cultural struggle and division that raged outside. It is not possible to examine the role of music in the prison-based cultural struggle without first addressing its background and significance in Northern Irish society leading up to the early years of the conflict. This chapter will focus on the historical background of political music until 1971, when the introduction of internment was a watershed for paramilitary imprisonment and its cultural significance. I will demonstrate that music was a key tool in the construction, consolidation and expression of communal identity of both sides, internally and in relation to the other, before the onset of

violence.[68] I will also suggest that the onset of communal violence from the mid-1960s until 1971 laid or strengthened the foundations of various socio-cultural factors that influenced the use of music by and related to prisoners in the following decades. This included communal segregation, issues of hostility related to politically-charged cultural expression, and the concurrent strengthening of its importance to communal identity. Instruments and songs thus became, or were reinforced as, not only symbols of identity but also of antagonism, dominance or threat.

Emotional communities and imagined nations: The musical heritage of Irish republicanism and Ulster loyalism.

The focus of this thesis is musical expression associated with paramilitary culture, of which political imprisonment was a factory as well as a key theme, rather than the more wide-ranging bodies of "traditional" Irish or Orange music and song. To varying degrees, this overtly politicised paramilitary culture was the environment from which prisoners came, to which they were exposed and absorbed into in the prison, and to which they continued to contribute upon release. As will be seen, musical expression surrounding prisoners and their movements took a magpie-like approach to influences and source material. This music spanned up-to-date, reactive compositions on contemporary issues, events and figures; the appropriation of popular, apolitical songs, the lyrics of which took on, or were altered to include, a different significance in the context of the conflict; and the respective "folk" music or more historical pieces, instrumentation and themes common to the wider unionist or nationalist culture from which they drew their heritage.

[68] As this chapter is concerned with the historical and cultural background to the violence of the mid-to-late 1960s and onwards, I will primarily address songs composed before the beginning of the recent conflict and, in some instances, songs composed during the conflict about historical events.

Vallely distinguishes between "traditional" music and "the derivative political music which involves the traditional (Protestant) Orange and (Catholic) nationalist bands, the distinct Lambeg drum music tradition and the bodies of Orange and republican song," and it is this "derivative political music" that is of most relevance here.[69] However, as the qualifier suggests, both explicitly loyalist and republican musical expression evokes older and less clearly political music and song.

The historical bodies of song drawn upon by republicans and loyalists are inextricable from conceptions of nationalism and nationhood. The ideas and themes the songs express, combined with the continuity of those tropes implied by the songs' long-standing use, suggest an unbroken and indefatigable ethno-nationalist community, the existence of which gives authority and legitimacy to the modern group claiming to act in its name. The accuracy of claims made by these songs, and indeed of the songs' own purported historical pedigree, is less relevant than the emotional connection to and sense of nationhood, identity and community they transmit. "Communities are to be distinguished, not by their falsity/genuineness, but by the style in which they are imagined," Anderson writes, and music and song has been integral to that imagining and its "style" on both sides.[70]

As well as lyrical content and lineage, the act of singing, performing music collectively or other sonic activity simultaneously expresses and entrenches a community. "All music, any organization of sounds is… a tool for the creation or consolidation of a community," Attali states, an effect that may be temporary, but is particularly potent and persistent when connected

[69] Vallely, 2008, p. xiii
[70] Anderson, p. 6

to ideas of tradition, inheritance and the propagation of ethno-nationalist identity.[71] These factors mean music plays a key role in constructing communities and acts as a forum for struggles between them: "Music is hardly just sound that is passively listened to, but a sonic force that acts on bodies and minds and creates its own life rhythms; rhythms that power recognizes and tries to monopolize through a relentless domination of societal noise."[72] As will be seen, "domination" of and through music and noise was employed in myriad contexts and directions throughout the conflict and its prison manifestation, in order to construct, reinforce and perpetuate, or undermine and contest, the identity and authority of the communities involved.

Irish nationalism and republicanism.

Rebel songs and street ballads.

While the recent conflict moulded the loyalist and republican musical canons into their contemporary incarnations, history is their thematic life blood, and many of the songs in rotation during the conflict and beyond have long lineages. Faolain dates the Irish tradition from the Norman conquest of 1169 and, while it is unusual for songs to echo this far back, the "legend and rapier" qualities he identifies in lyrics of that period continue.[73] The earliest event that remains "live" in Irish nationalist or republican music is the 1798 Rebellion of the United Irishmen, which inspired *The Croppy Boy*, *Kelly, the Boy from Killane*, and, sung to the same tune, *The Rising of the Moon* and *The Wearing of the Green*, to name only a few pieces

[71] Attali, p. 6.
[72] Balliger, p. 23.
[73] Faolain, 1983, p. ix. While republican songs do not generally address the Norman invasion directly, reference to eight-hundred years of domination and/or struggle, or to the 1160s as the beginning of ongoing conflict are not uncommon, as seen in Francie Brolly's *H-Block Song* or The Wolfe Tones' *You'll Never Beat the Irish.*

composed contemporaneously or since the Rebellion that are still in circulation. As well as songs referring to the Rebellion and related battles, 1798 is represented in republican music through several songs that memorialise the uprising's leaders, particularly Wolfe Tone and Henry Joy McCracken. Robert Emmet, a fledgling United Irishman at the time of the uprising and leader of another rebellion in 1803, can also be included in this category. Songs such as *Henry Joy*, *Tone's Grave*, *Kelly, the Boy from Killane* and *Bold Robert Emmet* focus on the individual as a symbol of equal or even greater importance than the historical event. This narrative style is highly prominent in later songs about leaders and martyrs. The body of songs related to 1798 thus embed the importance of that period and those figures into Irish nationalist and republican music, and serve as a blueprint for this process in later phases of cultural production.

Writing on late 18th century versions of what would become known as "rebel songs," Zimmermann highlights that "these songs, which were within the reach of the virtually illiterate, were not only an expression of the singers' and listeners' feelings or opinions but also a form of propaganda."[74] They were a means of expressing emotions, feelings or allegiances but also of telling those engaging with the songs what their emotions, feelings and allegiances were, or ought to be. Rosenwein identifies this process as part of the construction of an emotional community, that is communities where the members of the group are bonded emotionally and there are certain norms or standards governing the expression of that bond, writing that "only as people articulate their feelings can they "know" what they feel and, reflecting on their newfound knowledge, feel yet more."[75] Commemorative or rallying songs tapped into existing sentiments, and also moulded and directed them. "They were effect and cause at the same time: expressing strong collective emotions, they could profoundly affect the climate of opinion," Zimmermann

[74] Zimmermann, p. 9.
[75] Rosenwein, pp. 838 – 839.

writes. “They were effective in shaping a common memory of some events and in binding the Irish together.”[76] This dual expression-propaganda, cause-effect function, and its role in shaping the emotional community through music, has been key to the use of music by republicans and loyalists to the present day.

The genre of “rebel song” or “rebel music”, still often used as a term for overtly political republican music, is as difficult to define as it is easy to recognise for those familiar with it. Zimmermann states that “on the whole the concept of ‘rebel song’ was vigorous enough for the Irish, though never clearly formulated; the audience, and the police too, could identify the genre in spite of all its formal and thematical variations.”[77] Despite this broad, even nebulous nature, certain themes are identifiable as present in many ‘rebel’ songs: the memorialisation of events, often battles or rebellions, and key figures in them, commemorated for their leadership, martyrdom or other personal and political qualities. Satirical or humourous elements, including mocking references to an opponent may also be employed. There is often an element of advice or inspiration, explicit or implicit, in such songs: a call to arms, literally or through emulating certain behaviours described in the song. The effect of this eulogising is twofold, encouraging the commemoration of the individuals referenced and the specific events in which they partook, and suggesting that similar actions or traits ought to be displayed by those engaging with the song. The emotional community is thus shaped in terms of its boundaries and its aspirational behaviours.

[76] Zimmermann, p. 10.
[77] Ibid., p. 35.

Musical constructions of nationalism.

This instructive function was a particular concern of Thomas Davis, the Young Irelander and editor of *The Nation* who composed one of the most enduring Irish nationalist songs, *A Nation Once Again,* in the early-to-mid 1840s. "Music is the first faculty of the Irish, and scarcely anything has such power for good over them," Davis wrote in *The Spirit of the Nation:* "The use of this faculty and this power, publicly and constantly, to keep up their spirits, refine their tastes, warm their courage, increase their union, and renew their zeal, is the duty of every patriot."[78] Davis' tone may reveal a certain paternalistic attitude from the well-educated and literary Young Irelanders. However, the acknowledgement that music has such power over morale, zeal and courage, and suggestion that proper use of this music is "the duty of every patriot" rather than an irrelevant cultural by-product or simply entertainment, is a clear forerunner of the use of cultural production in political mobilisation seen in the recent republican prison experience. His description suggests a more self-conscious, targeted creation and distribution of songs than the nebulous and even mythical origins that can be associated with Irish traditional music. "Thomas Davis and his colleagues on the Nation newspaper harnessed elements of the ethnic repertory together with a hitherto untapped resource of street ballads in the service of political and social amelioration," White describes, as part of a "very specific programme of musical and poetic propaganda."[79]

What Davis' songs may have lacked in mythology in terms of their origins, they made up for in their content. *A Nation Once Again,* a mainstay of numerous prison-based anecdotes examined in the following chapters, is a sprawling epic which incorporates ancient Greece, Rome,

[78] Thomas Davis, preface to *The Spirit of the Nation,* p. VI (Quoted in Zimmermann, p. 75).
[79] White, Harry, "The Preservation of Music and Irish Cultural History," *International Review of the Aesthetics and Sociology of Music,* Vol. 27, No. 2 (Dec., 1996), 123-138, p. 129.

religious and natural imagery in its expression of the desire for Irish freedom. The song also invokes inheritance, with the opening lines “When boyhood's fire was in my blood/ I read of ancient freemen” through a lineage drawn between the narrator, his younger self and historical heroism.[80] The emphasis on emotional, metaphorical inheritance and inspiration rather than familial ties may relate to the fact that Davis, like a number of other prominent eighteenth and nineteenth century Irish nationalists, was a Protestant, complicating an interest in the “birthright” element of Irish nationalism. These references are claims of authority, both that of the nation and of Davis’ interpretation of nationalism: “Aligning Ireland and the Irish with ancient Greek and Roman heroism,” writes Loeffler, “Davis's early nineteenth-century poem "A Nation Once Again," construes an ancient pedigree for the Irish nation and the nationalism that accompanies it, granting both the legitimacy of historical continuity, the authority of the Western tradition, and the sanction of Providence itself.”[81] The song’s first person narrative means that the “imagined community is confirmed by the doubleness” of learning through song how the narrator came to learn this message, similar to Anderson’s description of references to reading in foundational national novels of the nineteenth century.[82] As Loeffler suggests, Davis invokes contemporary themes of romantic cultural nationalism seen in myriad contexts between the late eighteenth and early twentieth centuries, which sought to give shape to conceptions of the nation and its spirit through epic poetry and song.[83]

References to childhood and growing up in *A Nation Once Again*’s opening and final verse suggest not only inheritance but inevitability. Just as Davis grew up, so will Ireland become a unified nation. This song indicates the teleological nature of Irish nationalism and

[80] Davis, Thomas, *Essays and Poems*, (Dublin: M. H. Gill and Son, 1945), p. 183.
[81] Loeffler, Toby H., “”Erin go bragh”: “Banal Nationalism” and the Joycean Performance of Irish Nationhood,” *Journal of Narrative Theory*, Vol. 39, No. 1 (Winter, 2009), 29-56, p. 30.
[82] Anderson, p. 32. As pointed out above, song lyrics also have the advantage of being able to address and “confirm” nationhood even for the illiterate.
[83] Loeffler, p. 30.

republicanism, as suggested by the angel that visits its narrator and appears to prophesy the eventual fulfilment of his prayers. The republican goal and struggle in service of it can never be fully defeated, it has only not yet achieved its aims. The trajectory will not be easy, as this song suggests: "righteous men" must strive and sacrifice and may not get to see the fruits of their labour, but can never be fully disabused of the hope that, as the republican slogan goes, their day will come. *The Rising of the Moon* is another example, in suggesting that victory is as natural and guaranteed as the moon's orbit. As in *A Nation Once Again* this victory is not guaranteed in that it can be merely waited for, but rather must be hard-won, with "a million pikes" and "death to every foe and traitor."[84] Nevertheless, both pieces suggest that with sufficient moral and military might, sacrifice and bloodshed the nationalist goal can, and inevitably will, be achieved.

Inevitability and repetition: Building on the narrative in the 20th Century.

The theme of inevitability is related to the broader nationalist or republican trope of "the triumph of failure," which celebrates and draws power from the long-standing oppression and martyrdom suffered at British hands.[85] This phenomenon has converted suffering into a virtue for republicans and nationalists, suggesting their ultimate success is morally right and deserved, earned through the difficulties and deprivation needed to achieve it. The commemoration of the ultimately suppressed 1798 Rebellion and the bravery of its participants follows this theme. Musical responses to the 1916 Easter Rising and related events also exemplify the triumph of failure and the grievance narrative with which it is intertwined. *The Foggy Dew* places the events of the Rising against the backdrop of the First World War, lamenting the deaths of those who took part in the former, as well as the loss of Irish soldiers fighting for Britain abroad rather than for Ireland. The song points to action for the future with the lines "'T'was better to die

[84] Mulcahy and Fitzgibbon, p. 35.
[85] Beiner, 2007, p. 382.

'neath an Irish sky/ Than at Suvla or Sedd el Bahr," and the observation that "T'was Britannia bade our Wild Geese go/ That small nations might be free," while simultaneously executing the leaders of the Rising who had attempted just that.[86] These are less explicit assertions of the need for independence than those of the songs above, but nonetheless clear in their implication that while sacrifice and loss of life may be necessary, it should be in the name of Ireland.

Various other pieces entered the nationalist and republican canon between the Rising and the beginning of the recent conflict, including those relating to the Irish War of Independence of 1919 to 1921, such as *Johnston's Motor Car* and *Off to Dublin in the Green* or *The Merry Ploughboy*. These pieces are triumphalist and militaristic: the triumph of failure trope is not found in all republican or nationalist song, and in contexts where a rallying or self-aggrandising effect is needed there are numerous songs that can be enlisted. The IRA's border campaign of 1956 - 1962 was also memorialised in song, most notably *Sean South of Garryowen* and Dominic Behan's *The Patriot Game*. The latter, like *The Foggy Dew*, is from one perspective an unusually realistic and harrowing portrayal of the toll of war. The lyrics can be taken as decrying nationalism and the loss of young lives who attempt to be heroes in its name. However, its negative references to Britain's treatment of Ireland seem just as apt to inspire listeners to take up their own acts of heroism when experienced in a particular emotional context.

The unnamed narrator of *The Patriot Game*, the eponymous *Sean South* and various 1798-related songs are examples of another common trope in republican and nationalist music, closely related to the triumph of failure: that of the hero-martyr. Songs in this-subset, detailed by McCann in her analysis of rebel songs up until the mid-1970s, and built upon by Boyle, establish "certain qualities as defining what it truly means to be a *man* of outstanding character,"

[86] (Trad.)

that is, endurance; daring (or courage and bravery); intellectual, artistic or moral qualities; and loyalty."[87] These features are instructive of the qualities that should be emulated by the wider community. Many republican songs' protagonists are male: named individuals or anonymous figures, identified only as boys, men or fathers. These hero-martyrs are simultaneously singular, unique icons and representative of the ways in which the republican movement can and should be honoured, espoused and adhered to. While they are most pertinent to men's behaviours, there is a corresponding implication that women should play a supportive and comforting or complementary role. As Dowler suggests, the "public transformation of men into super-heroes renders them void of such emotions as empathy, sympathy and compassion," a gap which women, in the role of wives, mothers and girlfriends, are expected to fill.[88] This is reinforced through the comparatively few songs that address women's experience, such as *Grace*, which presents the relationship between the soon-to-be-executed Rising leader Joseph Mary Plunkett and Grace Gifford from Plunkett's perspective, imploring Gifford to console him. Prisoners, especially those who die in prison like Plunkett, are particularly compelling hero-martyrs, seen in the songs *Kevin Barry* and *Tom Williams*, who were hanged in Mountjoy and Belfast prison in the 1920s and 1940s respectively.[89]

The lyrics and music to *Sean South* also follow another republican musical convention. The lyrics add the protagonist to the litany of historic hero-martyrs, represented by Plunkett, Patrick Pearse and Wolfe Tone. McCann suggests this conjunction implies Sean South will be remembered, just as the listener or singer knows and is demonstrating that Plunkett, Pearse and

[87] Boyle, p. 190; McCann.
[88] Dowler, p. 78.
[89] Williams was part of an IRA group who killed RUC Constable Patrick Murphy, the other members of which were given life sentences and released in 1949 (English, pp. 68-69). The lyrics, or at least the penultimate verse, to *Tom Williams* were "written by a member of Oglaigh na h-Eireann in a cell in Crumlin Road Jail Belfast, on 2nd September 1942," the day Williams died, according to an article in Cork Sinn Féin publication *An Guth* ('Martyrs of the Nineteen Fortys', *An Guth: the Voice of Sinn Féin*, No. 28 April 1974, p. 3 col. b), demonstrating the potency of both the prisoner-martyr and the prisoner-musician/writer in such mythologising.

Tone have been.[90] *The Foggy Dew* underlines the comparative futility and folly of the Irish men who fought for Britain instead of taking up arms in Ireland by reversing this practice, noting that "had they died by Pearse's side or fought with Cathal Brugha/ Their names we would keep where the Fenians sleep", but instead they were rewarded with "lonely graves" and anonymity. There is a forceful or coercive element to this roll-call, as well as a descriptive one: the listener is being told that Sean South, Pearse et al will be remembered, and who will not be, and should behave accordingly. It is an explicit statement of the figures, and by extension qualities, to be included in the emotional community consolidated around this music.

This self-referential practice is also achieved through the repetition of tunes, as well as the names of older songs in the lyrics of new ones. *Sean South* is sung to the tune of *Roddy McCorley*, a figure associated with the 1798 Rebellion. *The Wearing of the Green* and *The Rising of the Moon,* both of which refer to the events of 1798, share a tune. Various songs that originated during the recent conflict borrowed more well-established tunes, for example, *Up in the Armagh Prison*, about Bernadette Devlin, was sung to the melody of Dominic Behan's *The Auld Triangle*. There is a pragmatic element to this practice: pre-existing tunes have been proven popular, emotive or rousing, and will be known by musicians and audiences, meaning the new or altered song can be circulated with greater efficiency and ease. It also has ideological significance, particularly when a song referring to contemporary events uses the tune of a piece commonly associated with a past battle, tragedy or figure. This practice reinforces the place of the referenced, original song and the new one in the canon, with the older piece conferring legitimacy on the new, and the new imbuing renewed relevance on the old.

[90] McCann, p. 239.

It also suggests an unbroken trajectory and established tradition, even when the older piece may not have been in regular circulation or a new socio-cultural context has changed the resonance of its lyrics. This is as an example of what Hobsbawm and Ranger have termed an "invented tradition," in which past cultural practices or artefacts are cherry-picked or adapted, consciously or otherwise, in service of contemporary, usually nationalistic, needs.[91] Latterly, this self-conscious continuity has been achieved by referencing the names of older songs in new compositions, in order to critique or draw credentials from the invoked cultural inheritance: *The Wearing of the Green* is referred to in songs including *Monto*, a folk piece recorded by The Dubliners, as well as punk band Stiff Little Fingers' critique of Irish American support for republican paramilitaries, *Each Dollar a Bullet*.

Ulster unionism and loyalism.

Many of the themes or rhetorical devices identified in the songs above are also found in unionist, loyalist or "Orange" music. Key pieces have been integral to the emotional or imagined community surrounding them during the recent conflict, as has a similar perception of their permanence as a legitimising link between historical events and the contemporary movement. As with republican and nationalist "rebel" songs this is a fluid and difficult to define body of music, recognisable to those familiar with it but lacking a definitive, consistent checklist of thematic or musical features.

Musicians or fans involved with these "derivative" genres will often engage with, or at least not object to, more apolitical "traditional" music. This music can act as further evidence of the strength and richness of the culture related to their ethno-nationalist group, or transfer specific

[91] Hobsbawm and Ranger, p. 1.

social or political capital or legitimacy. There is a certain fluidity and accommodation between Irish traditional, and indeed more mainstream, musicians and fans and some of the more overtly political songs outlined here. This distinction appears stronger with regards to loyalist music which, while influenced by the Orange tradition and certain other genres, is far more isolated. This can be attributed to various factors including lyrical content, class and wider issues regarding loyalist identity which will be seen below and in subsequent chapters, and which affected both loyalist cultural production and wider political status.

Cultural purity and the ownership of history.

Zimmermann reports that "the oldest political ballad-sheet I have seen in the National Library of Ireland is the once-famous 'Lilliburlero', an anti-Jacobite parody issued in the late 1680's."[92] While, as he suggests, this song is now out of style, it is nevertheless still recognisable as part of the loyalist/ unionist canon.[93] Its tune is also used by the still popular *The Protestant Boys.* Another older piece that remains commonly known rather than regularly used is *Croppies Lie Down*, dating from the 1798 Rebellion, and presenting a competing perspective to the 1798 songs discussed above. Writing on modern Orangeism, Ruth Dudley Edwards uses *Croppies Lie Down* to highlight how "one tribe's confidence-booster becomes another's humiliation," a key effect of the more bellicose elements of both sides' repertoires.[94] The 1798 Rebellion is a somewhat complicated event in terms of a clear, streamlined unionist or nationalist narrative: many of the "rebels" were Presbyterians, the religious and ideological forebears of modern unionism and loyalism. This complexity has been obscured through later reflections on this period: "The historiography of the rebellion, or rather the propaganda wars that were conducted

[92] Zimmermann, p. 10.
[93] For example, the title of the 1988 song book *Lilliburlero! ... and more songs of the Orange tradition, Volume 2*.
[94] Dudley Edwards, p. 239.

through the ostensible medium of history-writing about the rebellion" encouraged Protestant sympathisers or participants to "reconsider their interests in the long-term," O'Callaghan writes.[95] It is therefore perhaps unsurprising that the event's strongest musical legacy in this canon is the overtly anti-rebel - and "anti-Irish" if the two are taken as synonymous - *Croppies Lie Down*, despite a more complex contemporaneous reality.[96]

As well as this complexity in terms of categorisation, the comparative prominence of 1798 in republican songs, and the associated claiming of those events as "theirs," undoubtedly had a countervailing effect on its significance to the other community. Vallely argues that Northern Ireland's social division and proprietorial attitudes to music has alienated Protestant musicians and audiences from Irish "traditional" music, an artificial boundary stemming from the codifying, categorisation and zero-sum approach to cultural heritage and expression that was particularly acute during the conflict.[97] This encompasses instruments, melodies, genres and subject matter, reinforcing a perception of two histories and two distinct musical heritages that obfuscates both the intermingling between the groups and the diversity within them. While perhaps artificial, this categorisation aids music's use against the other community. The "lifetime of exposure to musical idioms, patterns, scales, lyrics and the associations between them" developed by a listener means they can often identify a genre of music and, in this case, its political or nationalist connotations, without necessarily being able to articulate why.[98] Discussing music's ability to challenge power, Kent writes that "the challenge may be delivered in the content of the lyrics that are voiced, but often insurrectionary music challenges through its

[95] O'Callaghan, Margaret, "Reconsidering the Republican tradition in Nineteenth-Century Ireland," *Republicanism in Ireland: Confronting theories and traditions*, Iseult Honohan (Ed.), (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 2008), 31-42, p. 33.
[96] See Beiner on the difficulties of commemorating or even discussing 1798 from a modern unionist perspective when "after partition, traditions of the United Irishmen did not suit the official unionist ethos of Northern Ireland and for most of the 20th century, traditions of '98 were subject to silencing." 'Whatever you say, say nothing', *Belfast Telegraph*, 2 November 2018, p. 29 cols. A-f. (col. f)
[97] Vallely, p. 41.
[98] Levitin, p. 39.

contrast with the music of those who dominate."[99] Establishing musical canons, and styles within them, that were understood as distinctly republican or loyalist facilitated this contrast and the power struggle it represented, regardless of a more nuanced reality.

This is related to the issue of cultural purity, which is particularly prevalent in the republican canon, particularly of the 20th century: Irish republicanism and nationalism has a strong cultural arm, encompassing, to different degrees, music, the Irish language, Gaelic Athletic Association sport and the invocation of various myths and legends. While unionists and loyalists also have strong cultural symbols and activities, they are mostly not as well consolidated, guarded nor promoted, for various reasons including the nature of the groups' respective diaspora, the more streamlined, identity-based narrative which republicans have established, and the manifestation of cultural oppression within that narrative. These elements contribute to a promotion of symbols of Irish culture within the republican or nationalist movement, and an emphasis on keeping those cultural aspects "pure," that is, untarnished by British or Anglo-Saxon influence, as artificial as this concept may be. The musical production examined in this thesis is that most closely tied to the perception of two distinct ethno-nationalist groups, with distinct histories, cultures, aims and needs. This is in part responsible for the retrospective sifting of historical socio-cultural artefacts into the categories of Orange or Green, as are other consequences of the conflict, including increased social segregation. Historical and cultural divisions in Northern Ireland existed long before the onset of violence and came to bear upon it, but the conflict also shaped perceptions of these historical divisions.

[99] Kent, p. 106.

The Orange tradition.

The 1790s were more significant for unionist and loyalist musical heritage due to the establishment of the Orange Order in 1795, and with it the publication of early Orange songbooks. As with republican and nationalist music, interest in and production of these songs appears to have spiked in times of upheaval or unrest: "They seem to have been particularly numerous in periods of crisis: in 1798 and immediately afterwards, in the days of the Catholic Association, of Young Ireland, of the Fenians, and during the period of agitation for or against Home Rule."[100] The Orange Order and related institutions the Apprentice Boys of Derry and Royal Black Preceptory have publicly distanced themselves from paramilitary connections or sympathy: Kaufmann states that the Order "steered its membership away from militancy and paramilitary violence," although there were some crossovers in membership.[101] The ideological, symbolic link is more significant: the loyal institutions' regalia, parading and associated flute bands are prominent emblems of Ulster Protestant identity, meaning loyalist paramilitary culture has adopted certain practices and imagery even if direct connections are minimal.

Parades and communal disorder.

The two most persistent historical Orange songs are *Dolly's Brae* and *The Sash my Father Wore*, both of which date from the nineteenth century. *Dolly's Brae* deals with a contested parade in 1849, at which the opponents are vanquished and the right to march protected when "...we loosened our guns upon them and we gave them no time to pray/ And the tune we played was "The Protestant Boys" right over Dolly's Brae."[102] The right to parade is a central trope in

[100] Zimmermann, pp. 298-299.
[101] Kaufmann, Eric P., *The Orange Order: A Contemporary Northern Irish History*, (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2007) p. 16; p. 75.
[102] Mulcahy and Fitzgibbon, p. 100.

Orange, and more widely unionist, self-conception. Infringement upon it represents a threat to the community's religious, political and ideological freedoms, if not its very existence. The Dolly's Brae incident was significant for Catholic opposition to the parade, the main focus of the song, and subsequent legal restrictions upon the practice. Following the violence, parliament introduced the Party Processions Act of 1850, intended to counter communal and sectarian violence stirred up by marching. This extended to the prohibition of sectarian drumming and music, although the act was repealed in 1872. Parades have long been a flashpoint for questions of authority, rights and freedoms, with Boyd dating sectarian riots in Belfast back to the 1830s, often involving the Orange Order.[103] This violence took place between the Order and Catholic groups or residents, and also between the Order and state authorities, as in a riot in Sandy Row in 1835 which left two dead.[104]

The events of Dolly's Brae are an example of music as a contributing factor in respective traditions' identity construction, further reinforced by the persistent use of the song of the same name. Legal attempts to restrict political music also demonstrate this music's dual function in communicating political norms and antagonisms, and as an object upon which those forces acted. As seen in the case of *Dolly's Brae* and numerous other examples in this thesis, political songs and related practices were both totem and transmitter of cultural identity during the Northern Irish conflict and key historical events preceding it, hence the vehemence with which they were often protected, wielded and targeted.

[103] Boyd, Andrew, *Holy War in Belfast*, (Tralee: Anvil Books, 1969), p. 9.
[104] Ibid., p. 9.

"Loyal and true:" Reinforcing symbols and values through song.

The most significant musical totem-transmitter of loyalism and unionism is undoubtedly *The Sash my Father Wore*. *The Sash* appears in many political song books and is a particular favourite on the 12th July, the celebration of King William's victory over the Catholic King James II at the Battle of the Boyne in 1690. I spent 12th July 2017 observing Orange parades in Banbridge, Co., Down, and heard the distinctive tune from many of the different bands gathered. The piece is also referenced in a range of other songs and paraphernalia. Like the self-referential practices of Irish nationalist music described above, lyrics of *The Sash* or the name of the song appear in, for example, *No Pope of Rome*, in which the singer yearns for a home free from Catholicism where the song is heard on a daily basis. *Come All Ye Young Protestants*, which uses the tune of *The Patriot Game*, includes the line "So lift up your glasses and toast with me join/ To Aughrim and Derry, Enniskillen and Boyne," a nod to the chorus of *The Sash* along with the battles themselves.[105] This referencing practice is seen in other loyalist and unionist songs, not only with regards to *The Sash*. *The Protestant Boys* is referred to in both *The Ould Orange Flute*, a humorous song dating from the nineteenth century about a flute so loyal that even when burnt by Catholics, it continues to play the piece, and in *Dolly's Brae*.

This process highlights and strengthens the importance of certain characteristics alluded to by both songs. For example, the flute demonstrates extreme loyalty to its heritage by persisting to play *The Protestant Boys*, the opening line of which is "The Protestant boys are loyal and true."[106] As with the republican or nationalist reinforcement of key events, figures and qualities, this is a simultaneous expression of dedication to the tropes commemorated or extolled in the song, and a strengthening of that dedication: a statement of their importance to communal

[105] *The Loyalist Song Book*, 1987, p. 18.
[106] (Trad.)

identity through which their importance becomes even greater. *No Pope of Rome*, *The Ould Orange Flute* and *Dolly's Brae* also explicitly reinforce the importance of political music to communal identity, extending to specific songs and musical elements, such as flutes and flute bands, as symbols of Ulster Protestantism and of the vigour and survival of the related culture.

Loyalty is evidently a central concept in loyalism and unionism, but not always a straightforward one. This loyalty has a "'conditional' character," as outlined by Miller: disobedience to sources of authority from those who proclaim themselves most loyal is not only permitted, but on occasion "only by disobedience to the Queen's laws can they be loyal to her."[107] This understanding of loyalty is based on perceived betrayal by official sources of authority and entails a "contractual" relationship to that authority.[108] The unionist belief that they are the true guardians of the sovereignty, legal freedoms and rights by which both Ulster and the wider United Kingdom is characterised is integral to the conditional nature of their loyalty. Recurring reference in songs such as *The Ould Orange Flute* to the "freedom, religion and laws" given to the rest of these isles by Protestantism demonstrates the importance of this belief, and reinforces the community's protector status.

The Sash my Father Wore is noteworthy for its presentation of history, as well as its cultural prominence. As Dudley Edwards notes, the song's refrain that the sash in question "was worn at Derry, Aughrim, Enniskillen and the Boyne" must be inaccurate, as the Orange Order and its emblems "did not come into being until more than a century after these battles."[109] Nevertheless, it is the impression, rather than the existence, of unbroken tradition that is most emotionally affecting: "The apparent historical continuity of ritual is an important feature of its power, the

[107] Miller, p. 1.
[108] Ibid., p. 2; 61.
[109] Dudley Edwards, p. 128.

unchanging form is itself a major attraction, to follow in one's father's footsteps, or wear 'the sash my father wore,'" as Jarman suggests.[110] This is a clear example of an invented tradition, contradicting Rolston's claim that "unlike the situation on the nationalist side, these songs [Orange Order songs] were not the products of a nationalist 'invention of tradition.'"[111] Rolston's assertion reflects a perception that republican songs are characterised by a romantic mythologising of the past, whereas loyalist music is more crude but perhaps more realistic or unembellished. As I have argued, there is a tendency within Irish nationalist and republican song to collapse historical context into a continuum of victimhood, oppression and struggle. However, as suggested regarding *The Sash*, the Orange/loyalist/unionist body of song also has this element. Despite the terminology used regarding Northern Ireland, these are both nationalist musical canons. It is a common feature of nationalistic music to emphasise key victories, losses and moral qualities such as endurance and bravery with scant regard for nuance or historical accuracy, particularly in a context of tension, insecurity or conflict. Moreover, there is a robust strand of republican rebel music that fits the triumphalist image often given to loyalist song, the lyrics of which are far from romantic balladry. While certain narrative themes and imagery can be observed as more prevalent in one canon or the other, neither republicans nor loyalists had a monopoly on mythologising or antagonistic music.

Parallel narratives.

Victimhood, authority and 1916.

Many of the songs in the unionist/ loyalist repertoire that resemble the triumph of failure or hero-martyr tropes in republican or nationalist music refer to the Battle of the Somme. These

[110] Jarman, p. 10.
[111] Rolston, 1999, p. 30.

events saw huge loss of life suffered by the 36th (Ulster) Division, consisting of soldiers drawn heavily from the Ulster Volunteer Force. Songs about the Somme and relevant figures were used particularly by the later incarnation of the UVF, founded in 1966 and keen to draw political and cultural links with the earlier version. The UDA also used related imagery in its lyrics. The Somme was deeply traumatic and had significant implications for Ulster unionists' self-conception. Songs referring to this loss of life in battle, and to a far lesser degree that of the Second World War, highlight "a key element in loyalist ideology: the sacrifices made by loyalists on behalf of Britain. Surely, then, Britain can be relied on to aid Ulster in its hour of need, just as Ulster aided Britain."[112] As will be seen, unionist and loyalist confidence in this perceived debt being repaid often faltered.

The Easter Rising of 1916 has a similar symbolic role for republicans. Led by a small cadre and "mustering altogether only about 1,500 rebels unsupported and even strongly condemned by the populace," the uprising was chaotic and quickly defeated.[113] Despite, perhaps because of, this failure, the events of 1916 have become a key point in the republican and nationalist narrative. The execution of its leaders was a blood sacrifice which placed a sense of righteousness and inevitability upon future generations of republicans, along with a duty to honour those hero-martyrs and achieve what they could not. As with the Somme, this event entails interconnected issues of victimhood and authority. Loss of this nature suggests future victory is deserved, but is also a reminder of the constant threat of failure or betrayal. Songs about or associated with the Rising, such as *The Foggy Dew, Grace, James Connolly* and *Óró sé do bheatha 'bhaile* transmit this simultaneous motivation and warning. Both traumas of 1916 also raise questions of competing authority and inheritance claims. The emotive, nebulous and even irrational nature of

[112] Ibid., p. 50.
[113] Kee, Robert, *The Green Flag: A History of Irish Nationalism*, (London: Penguin, 1989), p. 572.

music and lyrics can be used to both prove these claims of belonging and to obfuscate complexities that might call them into question.

"Horizontal comradeship": Streamlining canon and community.

The songs described above are particularly adept at creating the "deep, horizontal comradeship" Anderson highlights as key to national self-conception, through their collapsing of 1798 into 1916, the 1950s and beyond.[114] This outline of some of the historical pieces in circulation during the conflict, and the events to which they relate, is not intended to imply that the popularity and use of political songs has been static since the mid-to-late eighteenth century up until the late 1960s. Far from it: interest in and proliferation of such pieces waxed and waned according to socio-cultural trends and developments beyond the scope of this thesis. As suggested by the subject matter, this genre (or genres) appears to have been most popular around periods or incidents of political upheaval, and correspondingly decreased when the issues in question were resolved or normalised. Writing in 1967, Zimmermann noted that "in recent times new rebel songs have been written less and less, the main reason being certainly the abatement of political passions," a situation that would clearly change in the following years.[115] Millar writes that "republican music in Belfast would increase exponentially with the onset of the Troubles," and McCann describes a "new market" for rebel music springing up in the city during this period.[116] While older songs were valued during the conflict for their links to the past struggle, their importance during that period or since could have easily been overestimated.

[114] Anderson, p. 7.
[115] Zimmermann, p. 73.
[116] Millar, *Sounding Dissent*, 2017, p. 154; McCann, p. 440.

Similarly, the absorption of songs from a range of periods and provenances into a generalised rebel melting pot can obfuscate their own history and context. McCann writes that *A Nation Once Again* was "the anthem of the Nationalist party and played at their rallies and parades. A member of the St. Peter's brass and reed band in the period 1940-1950 spoke of the venom expressed towards this song by Republicans."[117] While many songs change their meaning or associations over the years, the purposeful or tacit glossing over of differences in, and indeed between, republicanism and nationalism was particularly useful during the conflict, when Anderson's "deep, horizontal comradeship" was at its most communally and politically significant. The incorporation of historical pieces into the contemporary canon thus reflected the long-standing existence of nationalist or republican music, but also presented a more streamlined, selective and stable genre than was likely accurate, for the purposes of consolidating the contemporary community.

Cold house, contested streets: Music under Stormont.[118]

Parading, authority and legitimacy: The Stormont years.

The republican narrative arguably achieves this horizontal comradeship with greater ease, as its narrative and sources of authority are, or can be presented as, more cohesive and streamlined. As suggested above, issues of loyalty, authority and power in unionism and loyalism are more complex. One forum which demonstrates these tensions is parades. While loyal institution parades could be seen as disruptive by the authorities, they also enjoyed a certain proximity to power. Following the establishment of the Parliament of Northern Ireland at Stormont in 1921,

[117] McCann, p. 199.
[118] "Ulster Unionists, fearful of being isolated on the island, built a solid house, but it was a cold house for Catholics. And Northern nationalists, although they had a roof over their heads, seemed to us as if they meant to burn the house down," David Trimble stated in his 1998 Nobel Peace Prize Lecture.

connections between Orange parades and the civil authority appeared representative of a democratic and cultural deficit experienced by Catholic citizens. The association of the largest parading institution, the Orange Order, with political power and by extension dominance over the Catholic minority and their own cultural expression was particularly acute during the Stormont period, until its prorogation in 1972. As Kaufmann writes, "Orangeism saturated the Official Unionist Party," later the Ulster Unionist Party, which led the Stormont government for five decades.[119] Every Stormont Prime Minister was a member of the Orange Order, firmly entrenching a connection between the institution and the running of the "Protestant Government for a Protestant people."[120] Parades, as the most visible manifestation of this otherwise secretive organisation, thus appeared as a symbol of the unjust or unevenly distributed political and cultural power enshrined at Stormont.[121]

Parades were often the sites of public disorder. They can be understood as shows or warnings of strength against the state as well as towards the Catholic minority, reminders of the conditional nature of the community's loyalty. While unionist and loyalists' self-declared protector-status may be interpreted as entitlement, it is also a position that breeds a high level of insecurity, particularly when combined with the issue of betrayal. The high level of association between unionism and the Stormont government pre-1972 implied that any greater rights extended to Catholics necessarily entailed a loss of this power: a precarious position in which the only options were maintenance of the status quo or a loss. The close relationship between the loyal institutions and pre-1972 Stormont governance was not a watertight guarantee against treachery,

[119] Kaufmann, p. 15.
[120] Bryan, p. 60; Then Prime Minister of Northern Ireland Sir James Craig stated in 1934 that "...it is undoubtedly our duty and our privilege, and always will be, to see that those appointed by us possess the most unimpeachable loyalty to the King and Constitution. That is my whole object in carrying on a Protestant Government for a Protestant people." (NIPD Deb 21 November 1934, vol 17, c72-73.)
[121] NIPD Deb 3 November 1954, vol 38, p. 3073.

neglect or perceived loss of privilege, and parades were a useful means of demonstrating what could become a competing source of power if necessary.

Public order and Special Powers.

Given the controversial nature of partition and the already fractious communal context in the six counties of Ulster that became Northern Ireland, public order was a perpetual concern of the region's governance even before the onset of the conflict. This communal division and the groups' respective robust cultural arsenals meant that public disorder often had a cultural element. The Special Powers Act of 1922 and subsequent amendments regulated much public behaviour in this regard. Section 23 stated that a person may be arrested (without warrant) with "reasonable grounds for suspecting that he has acted or is acting or is about to act in a manner prejudicial to the preservation of the peace."[122] These grounds included possession of a publication or document which could disrupt order, that was associated with an illegal organisation, or that criticised the King or police - the latter also an offence if done by word of mouth.[123] Other sections of the Act gave more specific discretionary powers, with the provision for curfews and orders prohibiting "the holding of or taking part in meetings, assemblies... or processions in public places," along with the use of badges or uniforms relating to any association specified.[124]

Most dangerous with regards to civil liberties was that deemed by McConville "an 'in-case-I've-forgotten-something' clause," which stated that anyone committing "any act of such a nature as to be calculated to be prejudicial to the preservation of the peace or maintenance of order in

[122] Civil Authorities (Special Powers) Act (Northern Ireland), 1922. 12 & 13 Geo. V, c. 5 c. 23.
[123] Circulation of any newspaper could also be prohibited, and anyone responsible charged with an offence.
[124] Civil Authorities, c. 3. (1). (a).

Northern Ireland and not specifically provided for in the regulations… shall be deemed to be guilty of an offence."[125] Such vague wording instilled insecurity and uncertainty into both the civilian populace and authorities as to what behaviour was acceptable. This discretionary element also allowed for interpretations that favoured cultural expression over restriction in order to preserve peace. There was uncertainty, for example, in how to address music in relation to public disorder. Donohue writes that there were attempts to specifically account for political music in the regulations, notably an attempt to ban *The Soldier's Song* in 1935, which was never enacted due to arguments from the RUC that in some cases preventing the otherwise peaceful performance of the song would cause a breach of the peace.[126] The police were also concerned that banning a specific song would increase its use in defiance, and lead nationalists and republicans to call for a similar ban on antagonistic loyalist and unionist songs.[127] This demonstrates an awareness on the part of the civil authority that the banning of political music only entrenched its importance to the relevant community, and thus its strength as a political tool. It also allowed for the multi-faceted nature of political music in communal division in Northern Ireland, with the recognition that it is not only an issue of republican and nationalist music against the state, but also loyalist and unionist songs directed at that community, and potentially against state forces.

One incident from 1964 demonstrates similar complexities, also around *The Soldier's Song.* Sean Caughey, director of the Northern Republican Publicity Bureau and prospective Republican electoral candidate, was arrested for singing the song at a rally in Ballycastle, fined £2 for "disturbing the peace" and imprisoned over night for refusing to pay.[128] The policeman

[125] McConville, p. 89; Civil Authorities. c. 2. (4)
[126] Donohue, Laura, K., "Regulating Northern Ireland: The Special Powers Acts, 1922-1972," in *The Historical Journal*, Vol. 41, No. 4 (Dec., 1998), 1089-1120, p. 1110 – 111.
[127] Ibid., p. 1110 – 1111.
[128] 'Mr. Sean Caughey is released,' *Irish Independent*, 15 August 1964, p. 8 col. e.

involved reported that a number of individuals protesting the republican rally were angered by Caughey's singing of *The Soldier's Song*, with some singing *God Save the Queen* in response, at which point "the sergeant said he had to protect Caughey, coming between his car and the crowd."[129] While it was ultimately Caughey that was fined, this complicates the idea of an explicitly loyalist/ unionist police force who would side with that community irrespective of the rights of or potential dangers facing republicans/ nationalists. Caughey's fine was eventually paid by anonymous donations received totalling in excess of £2. The surplus was donated to the Republican Prisoners' Dependents Fund, showing the symbiotic relationship of support between prisoners and outside bodies.

Commemoration, Cultural Confidence and Civil Rights, 1966 - 1969.

1966: Looking forward, looking back.

Cultural expression was thus itself contested during the Stormont years, and representative of profound tensions concerning rights, representation, authority and legitimacy. As Northern Ireland moved into the 1960s many of these issues began to converge in earnest. The IRA's so-called border campaign of 1956 - 1962 did not lead to noteworthy gains for the movement, but was still disruptive. More concerning for unionists regarding constitutional status were cross-border talks between Taoiseach Seán Lemass and his Northern Irish counterpart Captain Terence O'Neill in early 1965, first in Belfast and then Dublin.

Lemass was a forward-looking figure in contrast to the insular, nationalistic Eamon de Valera, who had preceded him as Taoiseach.[130] O'Neill can also be seen as something of a moderniser;

[129] 'Sang 'The Soldier's Song': Fined,' *Evening Herald*, 20 July 1964, p. 4 col. a-b.
[130] De Valera remained President until 1973.

Bryson writes that he "advanced a new strategy of pursuing general economic growth alongside conciliatory gestures towards the Catholic community."[131] To some unionists, this was a disturbing combination; an apparently more confident Republic of Ireland, seemingly inclined to interfere with Northern affairs at a time when their own Prime Minister was potentially receptive to this prospect and that of redressing their community's structural privilege. The Lemass-O'Neill meetings and O'Neill's engagement with Northern Catholics may have had a "focus upon symbolism rather than substantive reform," but were capable of creating unease nonetheless.[132] As Mulholland writes, O'Neill "evolved an assimilatory strategy designed to foster a new pluralist culture based upon acceptance of the Union. This very process, however, threatened the political certainties of both catholic and protestant communities, and indeed challenged their self-identities."[133]

These uncertainties were compounded by the fiftieth anniversaries of the Rising and the Somme in 1966. These anniversaries raised questions of respect, rights and inheritance for both communities in Northern Ireland. For republicans and nationalists, the anniversary of the Rising was a reminder that its goal had yet to be achieved, its executed leaders remained unvindicated, and its ideological heirs in Northern Ireland not entirely free to commemorate it as they wished.[134] In the Republic of Ireland the Rising was marked as a state occasion. The commemorations were pro-Irish rather than anti-British, fitting both de Valera's more inward-looking concerns and Lemass' focus on modernisation.[135] The anniversary was set against a wider cultural backdrop of national confidence which was felt, and expressed, musically. State

[131] Bryson, Anna, "Whatever You Say, Say Nothing": Researching Memory and Identity in Mid-Ulster, 1945-1969 in *Oral History*, Vol. 35, No. 2, Conflicts and Continuity (Autumn, 2007), 45-56, p. 49.
[132] Prince, p. 28.
[133] Mulholland, p. 11.
[134] Higgins, Roisín, Holohan, Carole and O'Donnell, Catherine, "1966 and All That: The 50th Anniversary Commemorations, *History Ireland*, Vol. 14, No. 2, *1916: 90th Anniversary Issue* (Mar. - Apr., 2006), 31-36, p. 36.
[135] From the British Embassy, Dublin to the Commonwealth Relations Office. 18th October 1965. DO 130/125.

commemorations used such staples as *Kelly the Boy from Killane* and *A Nation Once Again*, and the Irish popular music charts of 1966 demonstrate a strongly nationalist sentiment influencing music tastes.[136] Various political songs including *The Merry Ploughboy* and *The Black and Tan Gun* reached number one, as well as non-political but traditional songs such as *Muirsheen Durkin* and *Lovely Leitrim*.[137] One of the most significant of these was The Ludlows' *The Sea Around Us*, which was number one during the period of the Easter Rising commemorations, the lyrics of which, by Dominic Behan, extolled gratitude for the geographical separation of Ireland from England.[138] The Irish music charts from this period, in which rebel songs mix with the apolitical hits found in British and US popular music rankings, suggests that political music was enjoyed alongside mainstream popular music, rather than as a separate cultural practice.

The popularity of political and traditional songs such as these was also reflected in the wider Irish folk revival of the mid-1960s, epitomised by bands such as The Dubliners, The Chieftains and The Clancy Brothers. The Dubliners in particular were a clear departure from the crossroads ceilidh band, mixing drinking songs and political pieces with songs about womanising and contemporary issues such as the hardships of working in London. "Whereas the Clancy Brothers wore cream-colored Aran sweaters and charmed audiences with their presentation of a cleaned-up Irish folk repertoire, the Dubliners located their songs securely in a gritty urban milieu," Williams writes, adding: "Both groups offered an explicitly politicized sensibility... in response to the civil rights movement of the United States as well as the heating up of the Troubles in the north."[139] Shane O'Doherty, who went on to join the PIRA, describes in his memoir a feeling

[136] Higgins, Roisín, *Transforming 1916: Meaning, Memory and the Fiftieth Anniversary of the Easter Rising* (Cork: Cork University Press, 2012), p. 40.
[137] Kelly, Eddie, *The Complete Guide to Ireland's Top Ten Hits of the 60s*, (Oxford: Trafford Publishing, 2005), p. 145.
[138] Kelly, p. 145. *The Sea Around Us* was overtaken on 28th April by *The Black and Tan Gun* until 12th May, suggesting this nationalist feeling outlasted the commemorations.
[139] Williams, Sean, *Focus: Irish Traditional Music*, (Abingdon: Routledge, 2010), p. 230.

that "a rise in the popularity of Irish traditional and folksy music, much of which paid tribute in song to IRA heroes and martyrs, added to the IRA's absent acceptability" during this period.[140]

The Republic of Ireland's state-backed commemorations of the Rising dwarfed anything mounted in Northern Ireland, although "tens of thousands marched or lined the route in West Belfast" to mark the anniversary.[141] They were also different in nature: the former attempted to absorb the Rising into the state narrative, while the latter had more destabilising implications.[142] As O'Callaghan argues: "The Irish government controlled, or attempted to control, the commemorative project in the Republic of Ireland, thus marginalizing and, apparently, rendering "subversive" republican activists impotent. Belfast, on the other hand… provided these other republicans with a stage."[143] Rising commemorations were a forum for competing sources of authority within Irish nationalism and republicanism, and those in Northern Ireland were used by figures such as Ian Paisley to challenge the authority of O'Neill for permitting them.[144] While these commemorations, north and south, may have been indicative of divisions between the Republic and Northern republicanism, they could still engender unionist fear of a hostile neighbour and an enemy within.

[140] O'Doherty, Shane, *The Volunteer: A Former IRA Man's True Story,* (London: HarperCollins, 1993), pp. 38-39.
[141] Mulholland, p. 4.
[142] There were still shows of violent republican strength in the Republic of Ireland, most notably petrol bomb attacks on the UK military attaché's home in Dublin and the British Legion club premises in the city, and the blowing up of Nelson's Pillar on O'Connell Street (DO 130/125). While the attack on Nelson's Pillar in particular had a strong symbolic impact, including being immortalised in the song *Nelson's Farewell* by The Dubliners, the British Embassy in Dublin concluded that "there were a number of acts of violence but most… now seem to have been the work of hooligans unconnected with any known organisation" (From the British Embassy, Dublin to the Commonwealth Relations Office. 16th May 1966. DO 130/ 125.) It was nonetheless a reminder of dissenting approaches to commemoration and continuity regarding 1916.
[143] O'Callaghan, 2017, p. 123.
[144] Ibid., p. 124.

The 1966 anniversary of the Battle of the Somme worsened unionists' sense of insecurity. Similar to 1798, World War One is a historical event claimed by one community at the expense of recognising a more complex reality. Irish Catholics fought in the British army, including volunteers mobilised by Redmond in support of Home Rule.[145] Nevertheless, its enduring association has been with the unionist community. The trauma of the Somme was twofold: both the actual loss of life suffered and the lasting sense that this sacrifice was mishandled and under-appreciated by those for whom it was made.[146] Republicans and nationalists begin from a position in which they do not have what they want, and thus only have status and power to gain. Unionists and loyalists can achieve, at best, greater reinforcement of their position and guarantees that it will persist. In this regard, claims of the Republic of Ireland's "modernisation" must be tempered with the Ulster Protestant perspective. Lemass was certainly a moderniser in comparison to de Valera, and other contemporary developments, including the Second Vatican Council, contributed to social change. However, public (and often private) life in Ireland in the 1960s remained dominated by the Catholic Church, anathema to Protestants for religious and related ideological reasons, even if certain social values may have aligned. Any progress, prosperity or overtures from their southern neighbour was interpreted as an increasing threat of a united Ireland: in no way did it make such a possibility more appealing. The commemoration of traumatic loss such as that of the Somme, therefore, engendered further staunch commitment to protecting and maintaining the unionist community's rights, culture and political status.

The legacy of the Somme affected the 1960s and the preliminary period of the conflict through its contribution to general unionist insecurity, and more directly through the imagery and name of the Ulster Volunteer Force (UVF). The second incarnation of the UVF was formed in 1966 as a paramilitary group under the leadership of Gusty Spence. The new UVF had no official

[145] Kee, pp. 519-529.
[146] Beiner, 2007, pp. 379 - 80.

connection to its namesake, but nevertheless "unashamedly insisted on historical continuity and openly proclaimed this association in their symbols and songs."[147] These UVF-associated songs include *Here Lies a Soldier*, the lyrics of which encompass various themes, such as the importance of land and territory ("Don't bury me in Erin's fenian valley/ Take me home, in Ulster let me rest"), of certain symbols ("gently drape the Red Hand around my shoulder"), and a wider sense of duty and sacrifice, rather than glory: "Pin no heroes medals on my chest/ But if they ask you will you kindly tell them/ Here lies a soldier of the U.V.F."[148] *The Ballad of Billy McFadzean* expounds similar themes, in line with the hero-martyr genre discussed above. In this case, as with many songs in this political canon, the qualities highlighted are primarily duty and courage, displayed at the Somme and symbolised in the Victoria Cross awarded to the protagonist.[149]

The UVF were responsible for what would become known as the first murder of the recent conflict, killing Catholic civilian John Scullion in Belfast on 27th May 1966, followed by the murder of Peter Ward on 26 June on Malvern Street.[150] O'Neill swiftly returned from France, where he had been preparing for the Somme commemorations, and proscribed the new UVF, declaring: "Let no one imagine that there is any connection between the two bodies - between men who were ready to die for their country on the fields of France, and a sordid conspiracy of criminals prepared to take up arms against unprotected fellow citizens."[151] Nevertheless, inaccuracy does not always prevent the perception of tradition, and the UVF's modern version

[147] Ibid., p. 381.
[148] *The Loyalist Song Book*, 1987, p. 25.
[149] "The V.C. he won the young life that he gave/ For Duty demanding his courage outstanding/ Private Billy McFadzean of the U.V.F." (Ibid., p. 23)
[150] The political significance of Scullion's death was initially missed for almost a month. He was first thought to have died from stab wounds, until his body was exhumed following anonymous tip-offs alleging that "Scullion had been shot by members of an extremist Protestant organisation." ('Stabbed man's body exhumed', *News Letter*, 23 June 1966, p. 1 cols. D-e; 'Man charged with two murders', *Belfast Telegraph*, 28 June 1966, p. 1 cols. b-i)
[151] 'O'Neill declares new 'Volunteer' force unlawful,' *Belfast Telegraph*, 28 June 1966, p. 1 cols. b-i.

established its legitimacy amongst sympathisers through its invocation of the previous incarnation, as imaginary as this link may have been.

As Mulvenna points out, these links are established explicitly in one song, *The Man in the Black Soft Hat*, which was "written by a loyalist prisoner in Crumlin Road Gaol in 1967, [and] captured the strong mythological image of the UVF and of Spence in particular at this time… Written from the perspective of a man from Malvern Street who had been struck by the sight of the larger-than-life Spence in a Shankill Road pub in full UVF regalia a 'month or two' before Easter 1966, it follows him describing the aftermath of the shooting of Peter Ward and the eventual incarceration of Spence and his fellow accused…Other verses of the ballad describe fears of an IRA insurrection based around the fiftieth anniversary of the 1916 Easter Rising and a deeply-held resentment of the treachery of republicans during the Great War."[152] The 1916 anniversaries, legacy of the Somme and fear of a resurrected republican threat combined to make the UVF, particularly Spence, the saviour of Ulster Protestant identity, and to justify their actions, as suggested in the subsequent lines "When we saw all their Rebel elements and watched all their tricolours float/ There was a shooting or two, it was bound to come for 'Prods' can be driven so far."[153] This suggestion that loyalist paramilitaries' actions were solely defensive, having been "driven" to them by "rebel elements" and negligent authorities would be a key theme of such groups' rhetoric and self-conception throughout the conflict.

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[152] Mulvenna, p. 35. Spence later regretted the image of himself constructed in songs such as *The Man in the Black Soft Hat*, and found that younger loyalists he encountered in prison felt reality did not live up to their expectations, particularly as he moved away from a commitment to violence: "I felt I had to convince others, especially the young fellas who came into this place. This was resented in some quarters at first because I did not fulfil the image of the 'Gusty Spence' of the newspapers and what passes for so-called folklore. They had to be won away from the gun, which my image had helped to romanticise. Coward that I am, at the time I did nothing to 'right' the image since my ego had taken off and I was a hero." (Garland, Roy, *Gusty Spence*, (Belfast: Blackstaff Press, 2001), p. 96)

[153] *A Special Category: Book of Poem and Verse, Compiled in Long Kesh by a Red Hand Commando - U.V.F. Prisoner of War*, p. 26.

Music and paramilitary imprisonment before the introduction of internment.

As suggested by *The Man in the Black Soft Hat*, politically-motivated prisoners composed songs before the onset of extreme violence in the late 1960s and penal watershed of internment in 1971. In the few years from the beginning of the recent conflict up until the early 1970s, paramilitary imprisonment was incorporated into the wider, ordinary prison system. Prior to the introduction of Special Category Status in 1972, prisoners convicted of paramilitary offences were subject to the same regime of rights and restrictions as ordinary inmates and held in Belfast Prison (often referred to as Crumlin Road).[154] Nevertheless, this song suggests that despite the relatively low numbers of politically-motivated prisoners and their ordinary treatment, music and lyrics were still used to express and elaborate on loyalist political allegiances even in this early period.

For republicans, both imprisonment and music related to it were far more entrenched. In the relatively recent years preceding the conflict, the IRA's border-campaign of 1956 - 1962 had led to the internment of hundreds of republicans, primarily at the Curragh, Co. Kildare and in Belfast prison, during which: "Music was popular and useful, since the men had to make their own entertainment. Instruction was given in the tin whistle and, eventually, a concert was put on, with some thirty musicians."[155] This type of behaviour is by no means unique to the Irish politically-motivated prisoner experience, and musical practices can be found in literature relating to many prisoner-of-war camps and other institutions.[156]

[154] Gormally et al, p. 70.
[155] McConville, pp. 890 - 938; pp. 985 - 1064; p. 898.
[156] Fackler, Guido, 'Cultural Behaviour and the Invention of Traditions: Music and Musical Practices in the Early Concentration Camps, 1933-6/7', *Journal of Contemporary History,* Vol. 45, No. 3 (July 2010), 601-627; Barnes, Gordon, 'Music in a prisoners of war camp', *The Musical Times,* Vol. 85, No. 1215

The larger numbers of republicans who were imprisoned, and the more coherent organisations and campaigns from which those prisoners came, gave this prison-based cultural production a far stronger lineage than for loyalists. Imprisonment had been an established political focal point and cultural trope for republicans long before the 1950s and '60s, due to a combination of historical events and the ways in which they were memorialised and mythologised in the movement's narrative, including through song. Rather than simply viewed as an inconvenience, obstruction or unfortunate consequence of conflict, "imprisonment had long been incorporated into the repertoire of rebellion," and prisoners were active participants in terms of both the immediate campaign and broader historical struggle, rather than removed or excluded from it.[157]

As will be seen, loyalists were deeply ideologically opposed to imprisonment for their actions and to the assertion that they were ordinary criminals rather than political prisoners. They nonetheless entered the recent conflict at a comparative disadvantage in terms of the significance of this issue within their movement. Imprisonment fits clearly into the republican or Irish nationalist narrative of Britain as an unjust occupying force on Irish land, oppressing the population and locking up any part of it that dares resist. Loyalism fought on two fronts: against the republican danger on one hand, and the perceived threat of state capitulation to that danger on the other. The result was that loyalists were locked up by the state they purported to defend. While this apparently contradictory situation may not have lessened the vitriol felt by loyalist prisoners, it meant that lines were blurred between loyalist culture and that of the security forces. Most prison staff and police were from Protestant backgrounds and thus shared ideological similarities, ethno-religious identification, emblems, other cultural artefacts and

(May, 1944), 152-153; Coljin, Helen, *Song of Survival: Women Interned*, (Ashland, OR : White Cloud Press, 1995).
[157] McConville, p. 218.

possibly geographical roots with loyalists. The clear binary opposition that lends itself so well to emotive music and wider cultural mobilisation was thus more difficult.

The Civil Rights Movement.

Another factor in the insecurity that swirled around the 1966 anniversaries and contributed to the formation of the new UVF was the development of the civil rights movement in Northern Ireland.[158] Unlike more nebulous threats to unionist privilege symbolised by the Rising commemorations and Lemass-O'Neill talks, this was a concerted effort to destabilise the status quo. Protestants were felt to be in a favoured position in Northern Ireland by many who highlighted the principle of suffrage based on property ownership, rather than "one man one vote," as disproportionately favouring Protestants. This was compounded by the gerrymandering of local council seats, leading to the return of unionist majorities in majority nationalist areas, including Derry, and the perception that these councils subsequently disadvantaged Catholics in areas including housing allocation.[159] Civil rights groups such as the Campaign for Social Justice in Northern Ireland were also highly critical of the links between the Orange Order and the Stormont government.[160] The Special Powers Act and its various civil and cultural restrictions also came under fire.

The civil rights movement eventually became embroiled in the communal violence that heralded the beginning of the conflict, but began as a peaceful assertion of and demand for equal rights from an unrepresentative system. Although consisting of disparate groups, the most dominant

[158] English, p. 99.
[159] *Northern Ireland: What the Papers Say* (Dungannon: The Campaign for Social Justice in Northern Ireland)
[160] The Campaign for Social Justice in Northern Ireland, *Northern Ireland: The Plain Truth*, (Castlefields, Dungannon: 5th February, 1964), p. 3.

umbrella contingent was the Northern Irish Civil Rights Association (NICRA), whose membership spanned trade union and labour activists, students, tenants associations and Republican Clubs, which were banned in 1967 as "a front organisation of the IRA."[161] People's Democracy, based in Belfast and particularly active among students at Queens' University, was another significant organisation involved in the campaign. Its most well-known action was a march from Belfast to Derry in January 1969, inspired by that of US civil rights activists from Selma to Montgomery, Alabama.[162]

Music and international links.

Although Northern Ireland-specific in its objectives, the civil rights campaign was influenced by the wider global context of popular protest. Along with the struggle for rights of African Americans and anti-Vietnam War action in the USA, protests and radical social movements led by students, left-wing activists and oppressed or disadvantaged groups took place in Mexico, France, Czechoslovakia, Spain and other regions from the mid-1960s, particularly 1968. Leading civil rights activists, especially those based at Queen's University such as Michael Farrell and Eamon McCann, drew inspiration from and connections to various international and left-wing movements in this global milieu, including nuclear disarmament campaigns, the US left and transnational student politics.[163] These political trends were linked to a contemporary youth-centred cultural explosion, reflected in fashion, music and social behaviour imbued with optimism and a seismic generational split. Student politics at Queen's, as elsewhere, intertwined social life with activism. As Prince highlights with regards to People's Democracy and its

[161] 'Republican club ban: More men are held', *Belfast Telegraph*, 20 March 1967, p. 1 cols. c-f.
[162] 'The long march is allowed,' *News Letter*, 1 January 1969, p. 1 cols. a-g.
[163] Prince, p. 138; 148; 154-5.

university periphery: “For the overwhelming majority of students who took part in the protests, the movement was not a way into radical politics but a way of enjoying themselves.”[164]

Musically, this spirit was most prominently encapsulated by folk-influenced singer-songwriters, including North American artists Bob Dylan, Neil Young, Peggy and Pete Seeger, Joan Baez, Woody Guthrie and Joni Mitchell, as well as British acts such as Ewan MacColl. The folk aspect of this soundtrack reflected an idealistic nostalgia or hope for a simpler, somehow more real or down-to-earth way of living, combined with an edgier understanding of the modern world expressed in lyrics alluding to drugs, war and sex. Although their sound and aesthetic was extremely different, this modern-folk combination that characterised the aforementioned artists was not dissimilar to that represented in the Irish context by The Dubliners.

The civil rights campaign was influenced by this counter-cultural musical expression, with the use of protest songs, both Northern Ireland-specific and more global, at marches and sit-ins. Bernadette Devlin recalls of a march from Coalisland to Dungannon in August 1968 that “we sat down in big circles all over the road and sang rebel songs till midnight… The police were very good-natured. It was a situation they’d never faced before, so they left us there to sing till we were tired, and then we all went home.”[165] This police response, or lack thereof, paints a more peaceful, calmer view in stark contrast to the violence that would surround such activity just a year later. Devlin also describes that the march’s leaders attempted to begin a rendition of *We Shall Overcome,* the “civil rights anthem,” with the crowd instead singing *A Nation Once Again*, suggesting republican songs were favoured over international lyrics, at least in this instance.[166] Attempting *We Shall Overcome* situates these actions within wider global movements, although

[164] Ibid., p. 202.
[165] Devlin, Bernadette, *The Price of my Soul*, (London: Pan Books, 1969), p. 94.
[166] Ibid., pp. 93-94.

this anecdote implies the local context was more significant to many in the crowd. Millar also suggests that the relevance of international links to the civil rights campaign and its music can be overstated, at least in republican strongholds, describing a People's Democracy-organised event at which Ewan MacColl was scheduled to play but ultimately cancelled: "That the audience came in such numbers, had heard of neither MacColl nor Seeger, and did not ask for their money back suggests that, for all its internationalist rhetoric, protest music in Belfast, and particularly the working-class area of West Belfast, was principally viewed through an Irish lens and one separate from - although sympathetic to - the larger civil rights campaign."[167]

The civil rights movement also produced recorded music, which similarly straddled the local and international facets of its campaign. A later example of such an album, particularly located on the rebel song end of the spectrum, was The Men of No Property's 1976 *Ireland: The Final Struggle*, which featured another civil rights anthem, *If They Come in the Morning (No Time for Love)*. Written by US singer-songwriter Jack Warshaw, the song takes its title from black power and US civil rights activist Angela Davis' 1971 book on political imprisonment, itself a reference to the influence of the novelist James Baldwin.[168] The version recorded by The Men of No Property names Rising heroes Connolly and Pearse in the list of those "they came for," alongside Italian-American anarchists Sacco and Vanzetti and Black Panthers Huey Newton and Bobby Seale. Belfast is included in the cities in which various uprisings, social movements and repressive actions have taken place, including Chicago, Saigon, Santiago and Cape Town. The song is a regular feature in the repertoire of Irish singer-songwriter Christy Moore, who often adds 1981 hunger strikers Patsy O'Hara and Francis Hughes to the roll call of names, and the Bogside to the list of locations. This song is an example both of the perpetually unfinished

[167] Millar, *Sounding Dissent*, 2017, p. 146.
[168] "For if they take you in the morning, they will be coming for us that night," Baldwin, James, "An open letter to Angela Davis," in Davis, Angela, *If They Come in the Morning: Voices of Resistance*, (London: Orbach and Chambers, 1971), p. 23.

nature of the republican roll of honour and the hero-martyrs added to it during the conflict, as well as an attempt to draw connections between those figures and other international movements, without infringing too far on the cultural purity aspect favoured by republican and nationalist song.

Music and communal violence.

The tensions surrounding the civil rights movement, and their musical expression, contributed to various instances of communal violence. The People's Democracy-led march from Belfast to Londonderry was one demonstration that became an epicentre of communal division. Beset by violent confrontation at various points, it was a significant contributor to the deterioration of relations between the nationalist community and the police. A clash between marchers, police and counter-protesters at Burntollet Bridge on 4 January 1969 was particularly key to resentment and anger towards the RUC and Ulster Special Constabulary (or "B-Specials"), due to the perception of a lack of police protection for the marchers and officer complicity in the attack.[169] Chants and songs were also used to antagonise the marchers. An activist recalled that one group "just capered along, all shouting slogans and singing snatches of their loyal songs. The repeated refrain 'up to our knees in Fenian blood' seemed a little ominous to me."[170] This line, from *Billy Boys*, demonstrates how clearly linked to republicanism/ nationalism the civil rights movement was seen to be by its opponents. The Cameron Report noted that a group of counter-demonstrators was "banging the traditional 'Lambeg drum,'" and Egan and McCormack describe how "with darkness, the throb of the drum drew crowds armed with sticks and other weapons."[171] Events such as that at Burntollet Bridge symbolised a clear association between

[169] Disturbances in Northern Ireland: Report of the Commission appointed by the Governor of Northern Ireland, September 1969 (Cmd. 532) Ch. 16, 15.
[170] Egan, Bowes and McCormack, Vincent, *Burntollet*, (London: LRS Publishers, 1969), p. 28
[171] Cameron, Ch. 9. 93. Egan and McCormack, p. 5.

loyalist violence, unionist leaders, the Orange and other loyal institutions, and the RUC and wider security forces in the minds of those under attack. One song that developed from the events, *Burntollet Bridge Ambush* by the Men of No Property, reflects this feeling of division, with lines describing brutality and bewilderment at a lack of police protection.[172]

Issues of self-defence and antagonism came to the fore in Derry that summer in the so-called Battle of the Bogside, along with musical expression of communal division related to parading season.[173] The city had a Catholic majority and was at the forefront of civil rights-related claims, particularly regarding housing and gerrymandering. This period of 1969 had seen clashes, both in Londonderry and other parts of the region, including riots in Belfast at the beginning of August.[174] Along with 12th July, mid-August is key for parading in Londonderry, as the Apprentice Boys commemorate the ending of the city's Jacobite siege in 1689 on the second Saturday in August. The siege symbolises the strength of the Protestant people of Londonderry, and by extension of Northern Ireland and beyond, to resist and defeat the encroaching Catholic threat. The parade, held on 12th August 1969, sparked communal violence and rioting as it passed through the city centre.[175] Relative calm was restored after days of violence in which vast damage and injury had been caused, but communal division and its violent expression had been firmly entrenched. Violence and rioting in Belfast during this period

[172] The sense that the RUC was on the side of unionism/ loyalism led to hostility and resentment from nationalist and republican communities and civil rights activists, and the belief they would have to defend themselves, in lieu of the police if not directly from them. This undoubtedly contributed to the paramilitary control of certain nationalist communities and the alternative policing they dispensed, contributing to the communal closeness, coerced or otherwise, that benefitted mobilisation around prisoners.
[173] 'Stones: But the music went on', *Belfast Telegraph*, August 13 1969, p. 2 col. f; 'Bands played - then madness called a tune of terror', *Belfast Telegraph*, August 13 1969, p. 11 cols. a-i.
[174] 'Martial law in Belfast 'a distinct possibility'', *The Irish News*, 4 August 1969, p. 1 cols. a-h.
[175] 'The agony of Derry', *The Irish News*, 13 August 1969, p. 1 cols. A-h; 'Curtain of tear gas veils the flying bricks and petrol bombs', *Belfast Telegraph*, 13 August 1969, p. 3 cols. a-i. Rioting between police and local residents and activists lasted for three days, until Prime Minister James Chichester-Clark requested the intervention of British army troops, at the time a potentially more neutral peacekeeping force than the divisive RUC and B-Specials ('Bogsiders greet soldiers with cheers and smiles', *Belfast Telegraph*, 15 August 1969, p. 5 cols. a-g).

also resulted in significant injuries and population displacement, contributing to the geographical segregation of much of the city that persists to this day.[176]

Another musical aspect of communal division during these events was arrests for public disorder in the nationalist community. For example, two women were fined for disorderly behaviour after they "made a nuisance of themselves by arguing and shouting at police. They sang "Kevin Barry" and "A Soldier's Song" and shouted "Up the IRA."[177] While it is unclear which element was the most aggravating or disorderly, it is clear that such songs were an easy tool to express anger, stoke antagonism and goad the authorities. This phrasing also suggests that the *Belfast Telegraph* reporter assumes its readership would recognise the names of those songs and why they would be considered disorderly and related to the slogan "Up the IRA," showing the extent to which political songs and their significance were familiar to the populace.

The report notes that one of the women involved was a housewife, with no information given about the other. While it is not possible to guess their personal views on or involvement with violent activity, this incident raises an important feature of political music's use: its soft rebellion element. Music can be a precursor or even incitement to violence, and is certainly capable of causing fear in those to whom it is directed, but there is clearly a distinction between physically attacking an opponent and singing. There are many people who would not countenance physical violence or a kind of criminal activity that could have more serious consequences than a fine, but would be sufficiently moved and angry to engage in subversive activity such as singing a political song.

[176] 'Belfast - a city convulsed', *The Irish News*, 16 August 1969, p. 1 cols. a-h.
[177] 'Farmer in parade row sentenced', *Belfast Telegraph*, 18 August 1969, p. 7, cols. A-b.

Singing is apt for rebellious activity as it can be entirely spontaneous, requiring only a voice, or even just a body to hum or tap a rhythm or tune. This is particularly well-facilitated by canons of political music that are so strongly identified with each community and well-known to both that a few bars or lines of the song are sufficient to make intentions clear. This means music can be employed with little to no planning, in any location required, in comparison to murals, large demonstrations, printed literature or more developed artwork or performance. Any destabilising or subversive activity has an exciting, empowering effect on the participant: the emotional, rousing effects of singing or playing an instrument compound this, and the possibility of getting 'carried away,' in a manner that handing out leaflets or planning a march do not.

Social life: Segregation and amalgamation.

Youth culture in the 1960s.

Along with heightening tensions surrounding political music, the increasingly fraught climate came to bear upon apolitical socio-cultural life. This would have implications for the musical expression of political prisoners, and that of their wider communities in relation to prisoners. It was also significant for the more general hardening of segregation between Protestants and Catholics culturally, socially and geographically, contributing to the divisions necessary for paramilitary culture to thrive.

Despite the long-standing communal tensions highlighted above, inter-communal socialising in pre-conflict Northern Ireland was relatively commonplace, particularly for young people in the urban hubs of Belfast and Derry. Like the rest of the United Kingdom and further afield, Northern Ireland experienced the birth of the "teenager" and related youth culture boom of the

1950s and '60s, to which music was key. Many former politically-motivated prisoners highlight the significance of popular music in their youth during this period, from UK and US bands to the more local showband scene. Loyalist William 'Plum' Smith recalls that "the musical revolution with the sounds of the Beatles, Stones, Kinks and many other pop artists was changing the whole world of entertainment," and Gerry Adams has noted the prominence of showband figures such as Joe Dolan and Dicky Rock in his experience of Belfast as a young man in the 1960s.[178] Adams' reference to live performances by showband artists is indicative of the social life that was more possible in the city before the music scene was hindered by curfews, dangers associated with being out at night, and the reinforcement of the sectarian geography of the city's less central areas.

As well as this genre, Adams also recalls artists including Rory Gallagher and Sam Mahood as key features of the local music scene of his youth, centred around the Marquee venue on Skipper Street in the centre of Belfast.[179] These musicians were part of the city's active R&B and beat scene in the 1960s, of which the most notable figure was Van Morrison. As with all musical and cultural scenes, this trend needed spaces in which it could flourish, with the centrally-located Maritime Club becoming a key location for Belfast's "blues explosion."[180] Mulvenna's interviews with prominent UVF-member Billy Mitchell highlight the comparative normality and shared social spaces in which this generation was able to grow up, and how this changed by the end of the 1960s: "One of the venues that Mitchell attended on a regular basis was the Spanish Rooms in Divis Street, at the foot of the Falls Road," he writes: "The bar was notable for being a

[178] Smith, William 'Plum,' *Inside Man: Loyalists of Long Kesh - The Untold Story* (Newtownards: Colourpoint Books, 2014), p. 20; Adams, Gerry, *Before the Dawn*, (New York: William Morrow and Company, 1996), p. 64. While also successful as a solo artist, Rock had risen to fame as one of the frontmen of the Miami Showband, three members of which were later killed by the UVF in 1975.
[179] Adams, 1996, p. 70
[180] 'Cradle of Belfast blues, the Maritime, recalled 50 years on', *Belfast Telegraph*, 3 April 2014, p. 12 cols. a-e.

place where Protestants and Catholics could congregate and enjoy music as well as the famously potent cider or 'scrumpy' which was served unceremoniously from a large glass tank." However, "...as the 1960s wore on, the increasingly sectarianised geography of the city meant that few Protestants ventured near the Spanish Rooms."[181] A committed loyalist socialising in Divis Street, the scene of much communal violence and the gateway from the city centre to the republican heartland of the Falls Road, would soon be unthinkable.[182]

The effects of geographical divisions on music and social life.

This "sectarianised geography" by no means originated with the onset of the conflict, but was certainly exacerbated by it. The communal violence of 1969 and onwards caused an enormous population movement. Responding to specific threats, generalised security concerns or the destruction of homes in rioting, families moved to neighbourhoods dominated by their respective religion, thus reinforcing that segregation.[183] The so-called "battle of Bombay Street," in which hundreds of residents of that area of west Belfast were forced to leave their homes during the rioting of mid-August 1969, was an extreme example amongst myriad more low-level migrations.[184] This segregated local environment was combined with cordons, barricades and curfews which kept people in their local area to a far greater degree. Furthermore, sectarian killings such as those of John Scullion and Peter Ward gave a clear edge of danger to venturing out of one's own area. This division of streets, bars, clubs and other social spaces can be overstated with regard to Northern Ireland in general. It was particularly acute in urban areas,

[181] Mulvenna, pp. 27 - 28.
[182] Spence, who was born in 1933, also recalls of his childhood and adolescence that while sectarian divisions and "hostile territory" existed, there was significant inter-communal socialising, including Catholics joining in the 12th of July celebrations on the Shankill Road (Garland, pp. 22-24).
[183] See Darby, John, *Intimidation and the Control of Conflict in Northern Ireland*, (Dublin: Gill and Macmillan, 1986)
[184] 'Like a wartime scene... refugees trek along the Falls Road', *The Irish News*, 16 August 1969, p. 6 cols. g-h.

due to the preponderance of such spaces compared to rural towns. Even in Belfast, this was not a social effect felt comprehensively or equally across the city. There was undoubtedly a strong class element to this social division. Working-class communities, likely to have had the most localised lives even before the onset of the conflict, were hit far harder than others. Paramilitary culture primarily derived from the urban working class of Belfast and Derry, and so those communities are of most interest to this study.

The enhanced social division and increased tension generated by violence heavily reinforced the codes and categorisations of cultural, geographical and social features that indicated an individual's religious, and by extension political, background. Burton calls this phenomenon "telling," that is, "the syndrome of signs by which Catholics and Protestants arrive at religious ascriptions in their everyday interactions."[185] Such tells or signs could include, but were not limited to: given and family names; particular terminology or pronunciation used; schools attended; sports followed and teams supported; newspapers favoured; occupation, and geographical residence and routes used. Many of these distinctions pre-existed the conflict, but the newfound paranoia, and legitimate danger, it heralded enhanced their significance. Conversational coding and decoding was not necessarily sinister in intent, and could be an attempt to prevent causing offence. On the other hand, the wrong give-away at the wrong time could be a death sentence, if a loyalist paramilitary was looking to kill a Catholic on a street that signified that affiliation.[186] This was the modus operandi of the so-called Shankill Butchers, a gang of UVF members who in the late 1970s trawled areas of Belfast with a high Catholic

[185] Burton, p. 4

[186] Even with the segregated nature of Belfast geography, this strategy led to numerous cases of mistaken identity and other errors through which Protestant paramilitaries caused the deaths of other Protestants. One of the earliest killings of the conflict, in which the UVF set fire to the home of 77-year-old Protestant civilian Matilda Gould while attempting to burn down the Catholic-owned bar next door, is just one example. See McKittrick et al, *Lost Lives* (Edinburgh: Mainstream Publishing, 1999) for information on this incident and all the deaths in the conflict.

population in a taxi, looking for Catholics who they would then torture and brutally murder.

This inter-communal coding bonds each community together internally, both physically and emotionally, around significant cultural artefacts. If inter-communal interaction is fraught with scrutiny, there is a clear appeal to a social context in which many people already know your name, school, sporting interests or family background and share the same affiliations. As will be suggested in the following chapters, these tight-knit, urban working-class communities, many of which would experience some degree of paramilitary control, became key groups in the mobilisation around prisoners, in which music was an important tool.

Cultural signifiers which could be uncomfortably or even dangerously revelatory in one context became more closely protected and even promoted as symbols of that cultural identity in another. Instances of inter-communal tension enhance the use of and importance given to music as a symbol of identity. This contributes to the use of music in an antagonistic fashion which can then generate further division, and increased emphasis on marking identity. The importance of this music to its own community was not only in relation to the "other." The more segregated socio-cultural life became, the more opportunities there were to enjoy political music as part of the day-to-day social environment. Antagonistic lyrics also inspire and fortify the community from which they originate: the solidarity and emotional bonding generated by this practice is often more potent than the ability to rile the other community or legal authorities.

Fusing political and popular music.

The prominence of political music in communal social life meant that it mixed with popular or apolitical music. In his ethnography of a working-class community in Belfast in the 1970s, identified by the pseudonym "Anro," Burton describes how "parish dinners in particular were

characterized by an amalgam of the elements of the community's culture… there followed a lively series of singing and dancing to carols, Republican 'oldies', popular music and Anro's own song," the latter having been written in 1969 in response to local rioting.[187] The description of this "amalgam" suggests political music, both contemporary and more established pieces, were not a political duty or demand but rather existed side-by-side and indeed mixed in with the popular music that could be found at similar events across the UK or Ireland. This was likely exacerbated by the more local socialising of teenagers and other young people as the conflict developed, and the representation of tastes that might normally have found more natural expression in city centre pubs and clubs. The amalgam element was reflected in the seemingly natural way politically-motivated prisoners combined pop and political music in their cultural environment in the prison, and also for the mobilisation of communities such as that studied by Burton around them. The prosaic nature of political music threaded the tropes, instructions and aspirations that music expressed into everyday life. These themes are far more powerful if experienced naturally, intermingled with all the other emotions, social ties and formative personal experiences of communal events and their general musical backdrop; this also contributes to the more organic production of new songs and their proliferation.

Just as the early years of the conflict made political music more "normal," so it made "normal" music more political. As has been suggested, there is very little in Northern Ireland that cannot be appropriated for sectarian altercations, and popular music was not exempt: the Teddy boy craze, one of the earlier youth-driven subcultures in the 1950s, created tensions which "became conduits for sectarian confrontation amongst those who sought out such showdowns."[188] In his study of tartan gangs, which mostly consisted of young, working-class Protestant men, Mulvenna highlights how what was a relatively common sub-cultural phenomenon in cities

[187] Burton, p. 16; p. 183.
[188] Mulvenna, p. 26.

across the UK was shaped by the development of the conflict into a potential training ground or means of recruitment for loyalist paramilitaries. These gangs, like their counterparts in Glasgow, Liverpool and elsewhere, were characterised by a signature fashion style and musical tastes, particularly T-Rex, Slade, the Rolling Stones, and Rod Stewart.[189] However, "during the early months of 1971, the cultural interests that had largely informed gang identity were overtaken by the martial and political as the young Tartans watched the IRA campaign increase in ferocity, and the larger gangs were "unofficially courted by East Belfast men who later transpired to be the local UVF."[190] The tartan gangs, despite their more apolitical, broader sub-cultural origins, became absorbed into loyalist paramilitary culture, as seen in the song *Woodstock Tartans*, which highlights the gangs' martial themes over any wider cultural influence or connection.[191] Nevertheless, the tartans' youth and the generational shift they represented appeared to remain a source of pride, suggested by the claim in loyalist prisoner-support publication *The Orange Cross* that "we are proud of the genuine Tartans, because they are putting to shame the beer-swilling bravados of the older generations who are only content to sit in pubs and shebeens and boast of their non-existent exploits."[192]

This is another example of the amalgamation of a range of musical elements into the cultural milieu surrounding paramilitaries in the early years of the conflict. Structures created by less political cultural phenomena, of which popular music was a key part, became enmeshed with or appropriated by overt paramilitary activity. The popular music became less significant but the camaraderie and emotional solidarity it had contributed to primed gang members for paramilitary life. Similarly, as shared spaces for musical trends and communal socialising became harder to access and social life was pushed back into tight-knit, religiously or

[189] Ibid., p. 87-88.
[190] Ibid., p. 89; 164.
[191] *Orange Loyalist Songs, 1972* (no page numbers.)
[192] 'The "Tartans", *The Orange Cross*, May 1972, p. 2 cols. a-b.

politically-homogenous local communities, political music also became intertwined with the general backdrop to everyday life. This both forged and reinforced emotional connections to that music and the tropes it transmitted, priming communities for the psychological and pragmatic support that would become so important to prisoner-related campaigns, as well as to endure the personal hardships that imprisonment, or the imprisonment of a loved one, entailed.

The development of the paramilitaries' cultural milieu.

As will be seen, both republican and loyalist groups developed a robust cultural wing, strongly connected to their prisoners. In musical terms, this spanned song books, records, fundraising events and concerts, the use of music at parades and demonstrations, and production of music-related handicrafts such as ornamental harps and drums. Much of this served fund-raising or specific pragmatic purposes, but was also enlisted in maintaining morale, commitment and reinforcing the broader political goal. This cultural production was heavily community based, usually facilitated through prisoners' welfare groups or other, broader, campaigns, rather than explicitly connected to an illegal paramilitary organisation, although this link clearly existed. Music and related socialising was also useful in situating the paramilitary in the community: loyalist and republican organisations kept strong links to pubs, drinking clubs and shebeens within their local area, both for pragmatic purposes and the broader status and surveillance benefits of maintaining such a presence.

These practices were heavily influenced by and based upon the various factors which I have set out in this chapter: the existence of historical political music and the divisions which it expressed and reinforced; the context of the 1960s, and the acute concerns over cultural identity, insecurity and rights it entailed; and the effects of the nascent conflict on the importance of political music to cultural identity, the way in which such music was experienced, and the socio-

political developments that facilitated its amalgamation with other aspects of musical expression and daily life. All these factors would be integral to the use of music in the cultural struggle within the prison, and to music's transmission of the prison struggle into the wider culture.

Chapter Two: Music in the Prisons 1: Reactive Containment, 1969 - 1976.

This socio-cultural context was imported into the prison by prisoners. The prison was itself also a significant generator of social, cultural and political forces which were transmitted through prison walls and influenced the wider context outside. The means by and environment in which this cultural production was generated depended on the phase of paramilitary imprisonment, and the corresponding rights, protests and physical layout of the prison it entailed. The following three chapters on music within the prisons will correspond to the three chronological phases of paramilitary imprisonment during the conflict, as per the definitions set out by Gormally et al: ""reactive containment" (1969-76), "criminalization" (1976-81), and "normalization" (1981 onward)."[193] For the most part, these chapters will address songs written and produced within prison, with outside compositions examined primarily in Chapter Five. My concern, however, is to examine music's ability to link the prison-based struggle with its cultural and political counterpart on the outside; as a result, the distinction between the two is not always fixed.

Preceding the explosion of communal violence in the early 1970s and the 1971 introduction of internment, paramilitary-related imprisonment, indeed imprisonment in general, was not a hugely significant issue in Northern Irish society. The average daily prison population in 1969 was 600, reflective of a relatively peaceful, albeit admittedly small, society.[194] This escalated to around 3,000 in 1979.[195] Heskin's comparison of crime rates in Northern Ireland, the Republic of Ireland and England and Wales shows that "the rate of indictable crime in Northern Ireland

[193] Gormally et al, p. 52.
[194] McEvoy, p. 16.
[195] Ibid., p. 17.

was slightly above the rate of crime in the Republic up until 1969 when the "Troubles" began. The gap widened subsequently and reached a peak in 1972."[196]

Two penal policies during the reactive containment period had profound implications for paramilitary imprisonment and communal responses to it, as well as prisoners' self-conception and the use of music by and in relation to them. Those policies were the introduction of internment without trial in August 1971, and of Special Category Status for prisoners sentenced for paramilitary-related offences in July 1972. The withdrawal of the latter was the catalyst for five years of prison protest, examined in the following chapter.

As well as the impact of these policies, there were other factors specific to paramilitary imprisonment during this period that influenced the use of music by prisoners, particularly those held in Long Kesh, as the majority were.[197] Segregation by affiliation and relative autonomy created fertile ground for the sharing and development of cultural expression, with song and musical performance used for group bonding, expressions of antagonism, as a means of passing the time and entertainment, and as a personal, emotional outlet. For republicans in particular, this cultural amalgamation and production were the early stages of the appropriation of the prison as an educational environment or training ground, which developed through the 1970s, '80s and '90s. Loyalists, too, used music and sonic effects to demonstrate cultural identity, with implications beyond the prison and this period. The years of imprisonment from the beginning of the conflict until 1976 were a foundational period in which paramilitary prisoner identity was

[196] Heskin, Ken, 'Societal Disintegration i n Northern Ireland: Fact or Fiction?', *The Economic and Social Review*, Vol 12, No. 2, January 1981, 97-113, p. 107.
[197] The prison's name changed in the mid-1970s from Long Kesh to HMP Maze. It is unclear exactly when, although it appears to have coincided with, if not slightly preceded, the construction of the H-Blocks and phasing out of Special Category Status in March 1976. Many former prisoners refer to the entire complex as Long Kesh even when discussing events following the name change. I will use 'Long Kesh' when referring to events before 1976, 'Maze' for those after and 'Long Kesh/ Maze' when examining the whole period, or when dates are unclear.

constructed, consolidated and asserted within the prison, and in which this group was embedded as key to wider cultural, communal identity on the outside. In this chapter I will examine the various ways in which music facilitated and strengthened those processes.

The pains of imprisonment and modes of adaptation.

Non-political prisoners in ordinary prisons often use music for entertainment, expression and passing the time, as one of many coping mechanisms intended to alleviate the so-called "pains of imprisonment." Established and expounded upon by Sykes, these more universal pains or deprivations that result from incarceration include the loss of liberty, goods and services, heterosexual relationships, autonomy and security.[198] In response, prisoners search for "modes of adaptation," as Sykes has it, or what Erving Goffman terms "removal activities," in the form of pastimes or long-term strategies by which the prisoner might preserve their identity, self-esteem and mental and physical health, or at least prevent these from being entirely eroded.[199]

Adaptations include, but are not limited to: physical fitness, education, religion, prison work, crafts, drug abuse, violence and group membership. These play different functions and entail distinct benefits and dangers, but can all be understood as means of surviving, adapting, and getting-by in unforgiving circumstances. "Myself and my fellow prisoners lived a hard code, but it was one of survival," reported Abbott in *In the Belly of the Beast*, his chronicle of life in the maximum security institutions of the United States: "Survival of dignity and sanity. If we didn't, we would truly be broken completely."[200] This applied to politically-motivated prisoners in Northern Ireland, just as to many inmates in various penal contexts. Only the sources of and

[198] Sykes, p. 64; 75; 78.
[199] Ibid., p. 79; Goffman, p. 68.
[200] Abbott, Jack Henry, *In the Belly of the Beast: Letters From Prison*, (New York: Random House, 1982), p. 79.

criteria for this survival, dignity and sanity were different as a result of the wider backdrop of the conflict and the "political" element of prisoner identity.[201]

Sykes' framework provides a useful starting point that can shed light upon the particular circumstances in which these prisoners found themselves, and how this influenced their use of music. As Goffman states, "when existence is cut to the bone, we can learn what people do to flesh out their lives."[202] Some of the things people do include singing, listening to the radio where possible, writing verse and playing music with whatever resources are available. "Through the ages, music and song have developed as vehicles for the expression of the pain of the prison experience, and as a means of survival," Skyllstad notes, along with other functions including providing a creative and expressive outlet, forging connections and accessing positive memories of pre-prison life.[203]

These practices are valuable in the demanding and restrictive prison environment. "There are few opportunities to assert individuality, to show personal autonomy, or to engage in orthodox types of emotional release," Cohen and Taylor write of ordinary prisoners, a problem that is heightened by the pressures of paramilitary membership and related behavioural codes.[204] Clemmer notes that songs and lyrics are also a means of controlling emotions and behaviour amongst prisoners, highlighting "the manner in which verse and doggerel tend to control the thinking, and subsequently the attitudes and behavior, of inmates."[205] This was undoubtedly a feature of music in the Northern Irish prison context, even more so than for the ordinary

[201] See McEvoy, *Paramilitary Imprisonment.*
[202] Goffman, p. 268.
[203] Skyllstad, Kjell, "Music Behind Bars: Testimonies of Suffering, Survival and Transformation," in *Music and Conflict Transformation: Harmonies and Dissonances in Geopolitics*, Urbain, Oliver (Ed.), (London: I.B. Tauris, 2008), 115-127, p. 115.
[204] Cohen and Taylor, p. 82.
[205] Clemmer, p. 176.

prisoners in the USA analysed by Clemmer: "Strictly speaking, the prison community has no folk lore. Basically, the prisoners are not a folk, nor are the tales and doggerel which have lived for years in the prison a lore," he writes, suggesting this limits the power of verse and other cultural or artistic practices to shape behaviour.[206] Politically-motivated prisoners in Northern Ireland did constitute a "folk" to a far greater degree, with corresponding norms, tropes and mythology that could powerfully influence behaviour, constituted around shared ethno-nationalist and paramilitary identity as well as the prison experience.

The previous chapter has shown that music was a key cultural feature of the conflict in Northern Ireland, and of the constitution, consolidation and perpetuation of the emotional communities involved. The deprivations and modes of adaptation common to the universal experience of incarceration combined with these forces to enhance the emotional and political power of music in the paramilitary imprisonment context. This shaped the cultural community within the prison and its wider connections outside. As will be seen, there was great variation across the periods of imprisonment, and indeed across the prisons, in the degree to which "existence was cut to the bone." This variation greatly influenced music's form and its purpose.

***The Men Behind the Wire*: Internment and its communal impact.**

The introduction of internment without trial in August 1971 was a turning point in the penal response to communal violence. It indicated an abrupt move from attempts to absorb paramilitary offenders into the ordinary prison estate towards the recognition, and arguably creation, of a new and far more demanding context. Internment was permitted under the Special Powers Act, and the initial army raids of 9-10 August, known as Operation Demetrius, led to the

[206] Ibid., p. 172.

detention of 342 suspected IRA members or sympathisers, around 230 of whom subsequently received detention orders.[207] The majority of internees detained between August 1971 and the abandonment of the policy in December 1975 were held in Nissen huts, or "cages" as they were commonly called by prisoners, within compounds at a former RAF base outside Lisburn known as Long Kesh. "At its largest extent the prison contained 21 separate, functioning Compounds," McAtackney writes, with each compound consisting of huts holding up to 40 and later, with the addition of internal divisions, 80 inmates.[208] As well as Long Kesh, internees were held at Magilligan and Belfast prisons and on the HMS Maidstone. The policy's implementation was met with widespread communal violence, and rioting led to further population displacement.[209] The introduction of internment, both as a policy and in practice, was a hugely traumatic experience for the Catholic, nationalist community, who were disproportionately, and initially solely, targeted by security forces. While a small number of loyalists were interned from February 1973, a reported 1,874 Catholic and 107 Protestant internees were detained between the inception of the policy in 1971 and its end.[210] This built upon and exacerbated pre-existing communal resentment towards the security forces, following violent incidents such as the Falls curfew of July 1970.[211]

[207] Civil Authorities (Special Powers) Act (Northern Ireland) 1922. c. 23; McCleery, p. 19; '230 of swoop men detained', *Belfast Telegraph*, 11 August 1971, p. 1 cols. e-g.
[208] McAtackney, pp. 18-19.
[209] 'Houses set on fire in many city areas', *The Irish News*, 10 August 1971, p. 1 cols. F-g; 'The big flight of fear is on', *Belfast Telegraph*, 12 August 1971, p. 1 cols. b-i.
[210] McCleery, p. 42; 'Internment - Summary of Main Events', CAIN Web Service, University of Ulster. McEvoy states that "in total 2,060 suspected republicans and 109 suspected loyalists were interned between 1971 and 1975" (p. 212). In either case it is clear the policy was overwhelmingly directed at the nationalist/ republican community, which was overwhelmingly Catholic.
[211] 'Curfew stays in the Falls', *Belfast Telegraph*, 4 July 1970, p. 1 cols. a-i.

Blurring the political and the domestic.

Internment and the related raids was also a watershed event in blurring the distinction between imprisonment and the communal or domestic sphere. The raiding of homes in specific streets and neighbourhoods in the early hours of the morning made this a shared experience, distinct from the individual and often isolating difficulties suffered by relatives of ordinary prisoners. It was not uncommon for multiple men from the same family to be detained, particularly as the policy and related raids went on.[212] Internment was felt as an attack on the communities from which the internees came, not just on those detained. The fact that almost a third of those initially held were released days later, suggesting detention had been unnecessary, further heightened this perception of communal victimisation, along with the sense that the private sphere could be invaded at any moment and an ordinary family member converted into a political prisoner. Children were also caught up in the chaos.[213] These sentiments were represented, and reinforced, in musical responses to internment.

The forceful bringing of imprisonment into the community brought the community out to mobilise around imprisonment. This would be key to the protests, fundraising and other activities required by the movement surrounding republican prisoners. The practice of women banging dust-bin lids on the ground to warn of army raids appears to have developed, or certainly increased in prominence, around this point. This had a pragmatic benefit, gave these women an active, participatory role in resistance, and further embedded detention as a community, even domestic, issue.[214] As suggested in the previous chapter, the more the

[212] 'Interned city councillor says "no" to parole', *The Irish News*, 22 March 1972, p.3, cols. f-g; Adams, Gerry, *Cage Eleven*, (Dingle, Co. Kerry: Brandon, 1990), p. 9.
[213] 'The youngest detainee was four years old', *The Irish News*, 10 August 1971, p. 5 col. c.
[214] One female commentator in the *Belfast Telegraph* was less than impressed with this phenomenon, suggesting that internment was not understood as a community issue by those outside that community: "The best thing those irate housewives can do in the present situation is to put their bin lids away, keep

boundaries between personal and political life are blurred, the more emotional conviction informs and strengthens commitment to the latter. Internment led to the production of dedicated records and songs, and created the conditions in which those songs could take maximum emotional hold.

The most prominent song written about this issue was *The Men Behind the Wire*, by Paddy McGuigan of the folk band Barleycorn. *The Men Behind the Wire* exemplifies music's ability to blur the lines between the prison struggle and outside cultural expression and political mobilisation, and was probably the first piece to significantly and systematically do so. It remains one of the most well-known rebel songs to originate from the recent conflict, and is still regularly performed. The song's chorus "armoured cars and tanks and guns/ Came to take away our sons/ But every man must stand behind the men behind the wire" reflects feelings of being targeted and victimised which many nationalists or republicans experienced following these events.[215] It is also prescriptive advice on how that community ought to respond. This is a notable example of political music's simultaneous cause and effect feature: the singer is instructing their audience to "stand behind" the prisoners, and simultaneously standing behind them themselves through an act of commemoration, solidarity and respect. The communal aspect of internment's impact is clear in the reference to "our sons." The later line "being Irish means they're guilty/ So we're guilty one and all" asserts Irish identity as opposed by and in opposition to Britishness, implying that if it was not actually *your* son today then it could be tomorrow.[216] If one has no choice in whether they might be a target, they have no choice but to resist this status quo: these lines are a clear call to action for the listener. Demonstrating support

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their kids off the streets - and stay firmly at home themselves. For that is where they are truly needed," 'An English view of the binlid women', *Belfast Telegraph,* 13 August 1971, p. 6 cols. B-d. (cols. b-c).
[215] Lyrics: Paddy McGuigan. Quoted from 'Irish Songs', *The Irish Democrat,* August 1972, p. 8 col. b (Credited as Barney McGuigan).
[216] Ibid.

for internees was highly encouraged in areas most affected, and failure to do so could be publicly noted.[217]

The lyrics of *The Men Behind the Wire* convey the forced entry of detention and related brutality into otherwise normal, unassuming streets and domestic scenes, scaring children and abruptly removing their fathers. This imagery represents the harrowing experience of such a turbulent change in circumstances, in both the army raids of August 1971 and the broader socio-cultural upheaval of the preceding years. This would be particularly extreme for families of detainees with little to no existing tradition of armed struggle. Written from a communal perspective, rather than from that of a prisoner, this song provided a necessary outlet for the collective trauma, tension and stress suffered with regard to prisoners, not solely by them. Another song written about internment, entitled *Long Kesh*, referenced various locations from which internees came, including the Bogside, Ballymurphy and Omagh, and was seemingly intended to create links between the localised yet common experience of the communities affected: "the words of the following song let us know that those interned are from various parts of the North," one printed version of the lyrics emphasised.[218]

This communal function of *The Men Behind the Wire* and similar pieces is an example of the construction of what Reddy has termed an "emotional regime", that is "a "set of normative emotions and the official rituals, practices, and emotives that express and inculcate them; a necessary underpinning of any stable political regime."[219] These systems provide direction on

[217] For example, an apology printed in the Sinn Féin-linked publication *Ardoyne Freedom Fighter* on the Internees Dependents' Fund stated "...we also attacked Saint Gabriels for the lack of support for the fund," when in fact the school was a donor. This error was rectified, but the principle of "attacking" schools that did not show financial support for internees' families remained ('Internees' Dependants Fund', *Ardoyne Freedom Fighter*, 1972, (no volume or issue number), p. 1).
[218] Origin unclear. Possibly: *Ardoyne Freedom Fighter*, 1973. No volume, issue or page numbers.
[219] Reddy, p. 129. While Reddy's "stable political regimes" refers to established states and their governance, I would argue that given their longevity and influence, loyalism and republicanism can also be examined in this way.

which emotions ought to be felt, and a framework through which to feel and express them. This framework functions individually and collectively, and can exclude as well as bond. An emotional regime comforts and aids participants in it, although, as Reddy states, "strict regimes offer strong emotional management tools at the expense of allowing greater scope for self-exploration and navigation," a feature of both republican and loyalist music.[220] Rebel songs and their loyalist counterparts are building blocks of their respective emotional regimes: both express and inculcate the emotions required to maintain support for and commitment to the relevant ideology. Lyrics that define the boundaries, key events and characteristics of the emotional community are part of this regime, by outlining the norms that ought to be adhered to and providing a forum through which that allegiance is strengthened. *The Men Behind the Wire* is a particularly blatant example of this practice, in its lyrical representation of communal trauma and explicit direction of that trauma into support for and solidarity with prisoners.

Raising funds and rousing the community.

This song also blurred the lines between prisoners and the wider community as its writer was interned himself, following the composition of the piece. McGuigan, who also wrote *Boys of the Old Brigade*, was held on the prison ship the Maidstone following an internment order on 13 January 1972, one month after the song was released.[221] *The Men Behind the Wire* and the experience of its lyricist indicates the often fluid relationship between music and prisoners: prisoners could be musicians, free people could face legal recriminations for their use of music, and musicians could become prisoners.

[220] Ibid., p. 126.
[221] Millar, 'Irish republican music', 2017, pp. 80 - 81.

This is also an example of political music used to rouse community support and channel that emotional sentiment into fundraising for prisoners and their families. The propaganda and publicity opportunities presented by McGuigan's detention were utilised for the simultaneous raising of emotional and practical support. A leaflet with the lyrics and details of a recording on sale for 50p contained the information that "Pat McGuigan, who composed this song, is interned at Magilligan Concentration Camp," encouraging sympathisers to "demand the release of all internees and Irish political prisoners in Irish and English gaols."[222] McCann's study of rebel songs in Belfast reports the impression that McGuigan was interned "apparently for the crime of writing 'The Men Behind the Wire' and 'The Boys of the Old Brigade.'"[223] Both songs became widely known, with *The Men Behind the Wire* spending six weeks in the Irish charts, and were used to benefit prisoners' families: *The Irish News* reported that "Paddy's 'Boys of the Old Brigade,' on release to-day, has been adopted by internees as their 'anthem.' Royalties from it will go to the Internees' Dependants' Fund."[224] An LP entitled *The Men Behind the Wire*, released in 1972, included McGuigan's internment order on the cover, as well as extracts from the Special Powers Act. As Millar highlights, this album was an early instance of the concerted combination of music, political ephemera and visual design in republican agitation: "Republican songbooks had combined image and text to great effect in the past. Yet with its stark cover, featuring a prison camp topped with barbed wire, turrets and World War Two-style Nissen huts, as well as the names of the four prison camps in which they were interned, 'The Men Behind the Wire' was one of the first instances where image, sound and text were combined to function as a form of multimodal communication for the republican cause.'[225] This record and its imagery

[222] 'The Men Behind the Wire' leaflet. Local publications also offered readers the chance to purchase the record with offers such as "Special rates for Civil Resistance Groups," perhaps to facilitate buying in bulk to sell on for greater fundraising, or at least rewarding political mobilisation with a discount ('Buy the first civil resistance record by "The Barleycorn"', *Internment '71*, December 1971, p. 6 cols. e-f.)
[223] McCann, p. 429.
[224] McCleery, p. 2015; 'Four more internees released,' *The Irish News*, 25 February 1972, p. 1 col. g.
[225] Millar, *Sounding Dissent*, 2017, p. 169.

indicated the importance of the prison, or prisons, as a cultural and ideological focal point, along with an attempt to appeal to and capture the attention of the audience.

The Men Behind the Wire album, Linen Hall Library (April 2018)

The Men Behind the Wire and the communal impact of internment more generally had significant implications for attitudes towards the legitimacy of politically-motivated imprisonment. As suggested previously, resentment from the nationalist community towards the security forces pre-existed internment, the outbreak of the recent conflict and indeed the creation of the Northern state. However, the introduction of internment, along with accusations of brutality towards internees, generated unprecedented communal outrage: "The peak of Catholic reaction was to the introduction of internment," stated a 1974 memorandum from the Joint Working Party on Social and Community Problems, adding that "unlike other issues which

enjoy a temporary public outcry, the matter of internment has, for the last 2 1/2 years, remained in a class by itself as an area of resentment by the Catholic community as a whole."[226] It was likely, therefore, that people who would not countenance support for paramilitaries did sympathise with internees, the effect of which allowed a transfer of this legitimacy from the latter group to the former.

While the song was written specifically about internment, "the men behind the wire" in Long Kesh and elsewhere could be seen to include both internees and sentenced prisoners; this link became stronger as internment was abandoned but the song remained in communal use. The leaflet quoted above suggests little rhetorical distinction was made between detainees and sentenced prisoners. The reader is encouraged to become angry over the internment of McGuigan and others, but the final instruction is to demand the release of both internees "and Irish political prisoners in English and Irish gaols." Many of these would have been paramilitary prisoners whose offences could have precluded them from generating such widespread support. This transfer of legitimacy or sympathy was combined with an increased suspicion of the justice system and security forces with regards to the nationalist population, which cast a doubt or suggestion of oppression over any imprisonment for paramilitary-offences in the minds of those so inclined. This more sympathetic environment generated by internment established favourable conditions for the continued raising of emotional and practical support. There is also a loyalist piece with the same title, on the theme of sentenced prisoners and "the sacrifice made by these

[226] 'Joint Working Party on Social and Community Problems - Internment - Memorandum for Discussion.' 21 January, 1974, pp. 3 - 4. 26/8 Internment. Cardinal Ó Fiaich Library and Archive (COFLA). A group of internees that came to be known as the 'hooded men' alleged physical assault and torture at the hands of the army, particularly the use of 'five techniques' during interrogation, consisting of hooding, sleep deprivation, the use of white noise, wall-standing and a lack of food and drink (DEFE 23/108; DEFE 23/111; McGuffin, John, *The Guineapigs*, (Harmondsworth: Penguin, 1974). Following a case brought by Ireland against the United Kingdom, the European Court of Human Rights found that the so-called 'five techniques' constituted "inhuman and degrading treatment" but fell short of torture. (Ireland v. United Kingdom, (5310/71) [1978] ECHR 1 (18 January 1978). 167.)

loyal sons."[227] The phrase also entered general loyalist parlance, encouraging support for their own prisoners.[228] The use of this title may have been an attempt to assert loyalist prisoner identity and remind the wider communities that political imprisonment was not solely a republican issue.

The "Lazy K:" Life in the Long Kesh compound.

Access to music and resources under internment and Special Category Status.

The blurring of boundaries between internees and sentenced prisoners was facilitated by their accommodation, for the most part, at the same site. Long Kesh had been specifically repurposed to hold internees and politically-motivated prisoners, contributing to its conversion into a far greater focal point than sites where paramilitary and ordinary prisoners were held together, such as Belfast Prison and Armagh. From July 1972, prisoners convicted of paramilitary offences held Special Category Status, almost de facto prisoner-of-war status, granted by Secretary of State for Northern Ireland William Whitelaw following negotiations with the PIRA.[229] Special Category Status provided a number of extra rights and privileges, including segregation by paramilitary affiliation, extra food parcels, and exemption from prison uniform and prison work.[230] This had obvious organisational benefits and also alleviated some of the more acute deprivations of imprisonment. Moreover, it was experienced as a recognition of political legitimacy. The clear distinction between ordinary prisoners and their politically-motivated

[227] *Loyalist songbook. Vol. 1.*
[228] 'Stand behind the men behind the wire', *The Loyalist*, No. 2, c. 1987 (no date, volume or page numbers).
[229] Taylor, 1998, p. 137.
[230] O'Malley, p. 19.

counterparts, alongside the comparative autonomy available to the latter, reflected, or could be perceived to reflect, loyalist and republican prisoners' belief that, even if they had broken the law, they had a certain right to do so. The integral role this recognition played in politically-motivated prisoners' self-conception will be seen in the vehement resistance which met its withdrawal.

In terms of the use of music, Special Category Status had two related effects. One was greater access to musical equipment, including instruments, record players, radios and cassettes, provided either by the prison authorities or outside organisations. For those with Special Category Status, even though "battery transitor radios will only be permitted to prisoners at their own risk and expense" [sic], this essentially amounted to free access.[231] In comparison, personal radios were permitted to ordinary convicted prisoners serving sentences of two years or more, although all prisoners in compound accommodation were excluded from this privilege from October 1976.[232] Along with radios, "inmates have access to cassette players through the prison educational officer. These cassettes only playback and do not record. They must be used under supervision by an educational officer."[233] Record players could be requested, and records were donated to prisoners by friends, family or organisations on the outside.[234] Instruments were also provided by prisoners' wider movements. A document produced by the group EPIC, which works primarily with UVF and RHC ex-prisoners, describes how "the special category prisoners were allowed musical instruments in for their Christmas parties such as electric guitars, a drum kit, amplifiers and a microphone. These were supplied by the organisation on the outside."[235] Television also played a role in the musical lives of Special Category prisoners, with *Top of the*

[231] "Special Category Prisoners," NIO/12/39.
[232] "Ordinary Convicted Prisoners," NIO/12/122A; Circular No 55/76, 18 October 1976, NIO/12/39.
[233] McCutcheon, HMP Maze to NIO, 18 October 1974. NIO/12/39.
[234] Board of Visitors report, 14 March 1974. Compound prisoners - Young Prisoners, p. 2. NIO/12/27A; *Over the Wire*.
[235] Green, Marion, *The Prison Experience - A Loyalist Perspective*, (Belfast: EPIC, 1998), p. 20.

Pops referenced as part of compound life by O'Hearn and Adams.[236] In this sense, access to music was a symbol of prisoners' Special Category Status and the broader legitimacy and recognition it entailed.

Special Category Status, as well as the similarly unstructured experience of the internees, contributed to musical and wider cultural production through prisoners' unusual degrees of both free time and access to each other.[237] The combination of experienced paramilitary members with far younger recruits, some of whom had very little grounding in active service or the relevant ideology, made this a foundational period in the development of modern prison-based paramilitary culture. This culture developed formally, through a focus on lectures, education, drilling and parading, and more casually. Known by some former residents as 'the Lazy K', there is a certain languidness and boredom in the memoirs of ex-prisoners recalling life in the Long Kesh compound, which gave rise to music used to pass the time and socialise, as well as its more overt political manifestation.[238] This lack of imposed structure was complemented by a comparatively porous boundary between prisoners and detainees inside Long Kesh and their wider communities outside, of which musical expression took full advantage: records, instruments and equipment were easily brought in, and a record was also made and smuggled out.

[236] O'Hearn, 2006, p. 55; Adams, 1990, p. 15.
[237] That is, unstructured by the prison authorities: the paramilitary leadership within each compound developed and enforced varying degrees of structure, schedule and discipline, and prisoners also had their own routines.
[238] McAtackney, p. 16.

The development and assertion of paramilitary prisoner identity in the Long Kesh compound.

These conditions were conducive to both the development of contemporary prison-based paramilitary culture, and an impetus for this culture to be actively cultivated, as a mark of distinction between paramilitary inmates and ordinary prisoners. As the loyalist contingent in Long Kesh grew, this culture would also include a need for the two groups to demonstrate difference between themselves.

In *Cage Eleven,* Adams suggests that musical production was understood as one element in a cultural and educational structure intended to fulfil as many of prisoners' varied needs as possible: "The study hut, incidentally, does service as the chapel, the library, a centre for discussions, lectures and staff meetings, somewhere to iron clothes, as a rehearsal room for our budding Christy Moores and Seán Ó Riadas, a bolt-hole to hide away when big Ds settle in and, of course, as a place where I slip off to scribble these lines," with "big D" referring to depression.[239] This quote suggests a relatively sophisticated and varied set-up in terms of activities and outlets in Long Kesh, in which Adams spent time as both an internee and a sentenced prisoner, and an awareness of the need for such coping mechanisms with regard to mental health. His references to Christy Moore, one of the most prominent artists to express rebel song-influence in his music and active support for republican prisoners, and Seán Ó Riada, an eminent figure in Irish traditional music, are indicative of the kind of music with which republican prisoners wished to be associated. It is an example of how music can contribute to a

[239] Adams, 1990, p. 92; p. 18. *Cage Eleven* was published in 1990 and mostly consists of pieces written in Long Kesh and published under a pseudonym in *Republican News* between 1975 and 1977. Both this original context and the collection's later mainstream publication point to a strong likelihood of embellishment and even fabrication in parts in service of the narrative. Adams, however, was a prisoner during this period and initially wrote for an audience with a high constituency of former prisoners or those familiar with life in Long Kesh; as such, general descriptions of the culture and habits within the compound will be taken as reasonably representative.

sympathetic or enlightened image in memoirs and other accounts of this period, through emphasising the talents and intellectual pursuits of inmates. The Irish folk element and Moore's political leanings link these associations to republican inmates, marking a difference between republicans, loyalists and ordinary prisoners through this specific musical heritage.

Paramilitary prisoner identity and action at Long Kesh established the cages as the engine room of the prison struggle in the wider movement. This meant that Long Kesh prisoners' behaviour elicited a practical and cultural response in the outside world and other prisons. Following the October 1974 burning of Long Kesh, riots were undertaken at Armagh prison, where female politically-motivated prisoners were held, in solidarity with those in the male institution. A report passed to the then Archbishop of Armagh described that from 11am on 16th October:

> "Girls did a lot of damage to the place and were joined by UDA and UVF women. Girls demanded that a representative of Sinn Fein, UDA and UVF should be allowed into Long Kesh to see what position the men were in." […] "Girls sang "We have overcome today" and we're glad to be off the hook. Some Women Prison officers broke guitars in girls' cells and poured disinfectant over the mats and rugs etc. while their fellow prison officers were being held hostage."[240]

This report indicates the primacy of Long Kesh within the various institutions that held paramilitary prisoners during this period, as well as the more comprehensive, cross-paramilitary participation in the October 1974 action than the republican narrative may sometimes suggest. It is also an example of music as both an act of resistance and a site of its restriction, through the combination of assertive singing and the breaking of instruments by prison officers, in response to prisoners' behaviour. Although *We Shall Overcome* was heavily associated with the Civil Rights movement, itself linked to republicanism, these lyrics may have been chosen due to their inclusive rather than explicitly republican nature, reflecting the involvement of UVF and UDA

[240] 'Long Kesh riots - Armagh Jail,' 16th October 1974, p. 2. 26/8 Internment. COFLA.

prisoners. This appears to be one of few instances of music used in service of a shared political prisoner identity, rather than a specifically republican or loyalist version thereof.

The green in the globe: Strengthening Irish republicanism through links to global struggle.

As would be expected, explicitly republican and nationalist songs were strongly represented amongst republican detainees in Long Kesh, as were instruments associated with Irish music. O'Hearn describes Sands playing "bodhran drum, tin whistle and banjo" during this period.[241] In another anecdote from *Cage Eleven,* Adams reports an inmate's response to a British soldier with a dog at the edge of the compound: "Alsatians once again, Alsatians once again,' Cedric sang to them both, to the air of 'A Nation Once Again.'"[242] The soldier then attempts to hit Cedric through the wire, to which he responds by singing "If you hate the British Army, clap your hands…"[243] The mocking tone in both songs denigrates and attempts to subvert the power of the soldier through suggesting a lack of respect. While the prisoner is putting himself at risk by angering the soldier, this episode is a useful ego boost for the singer, those around him, and a sympathetic reader of Adams' prison missives. Satire, mockery and humourous lyrics were a less prominent means of asserting power through music, compared to self-aggrandisement, aggression or simply volume, but could still be deployed effectively. This anecdote reflects the collective bonding element of political music in the prison, and how this was strengthened by its use as a weapon against the enemy.

Modern rebel songs were also employed, as well as long-standing anthems. *Faoí Glas*, "the journal of the republican sentenced prisoners, Long Kesh," printed lyrics to songs such as *The*

[241] O'Hearn, p. 73.
[242] Adams, 1990, p. 54.
[243] Ibid., pp. 55-56.

Armalite and *The Aldergrove Plane*, which addressed contemporary themes. This was presented as both a response to audience demand and an educational opportunity. The author writes that, prompted by a television programme on music and the conflict, they decided that people may wish to learn the lyrics to new songs, particularly *The Armalite* (also known as *My Little Armalite*), which "no doubt a lot of you will have heard sung before, but perhaps you might not know the words yet."[244] Familiar tunes, *Home Boys Home* and *The Kerry Recruit* respectively, also aided singing. As the author notes, *The Armalite* was recorded by The Wolfhound.[245] The chorus of this recording and others, including by The Irish Brigade, reference various areas associated with republican support including the Bogside, the Falls Road, Bellaghy and Crossmaglen. Notably, the *Faoí Glas* version renders this line as "And it's down in… that's where I'd like to be," leaving the prisoner or supporter to personalise the song. These local references make *The Armalite* more directly relatable for modern republican prisoners than the sweeping romanticism of songs such as *A Nation Once Again*, as do allusions to Saracens, being assaulted by a soldier and specific mention of being part of the PIRA.

The light-hearted treatment of these issues, jaunty tune and strength provided by the armalite could boost morale and lift spirits. The song's litany of altercations, one-upmanship against the police and army and general displays of camaraderie was likely particularly pertinent to prisoners longing to return to active service. It also encouraged and stoked this desire, invaluable to maintaining commitment during the comparative boredom, isolation and inactivity of imprisonment. "Accounts of this period speak of the fear that the fighting would be all over before they got out," Von Tangen Page notes of republicans in the Long Kesh compound.[246]

[244] 'Songs', *Faoí Glas*, Uimhir 3, Christmas 1975, p. 3, col. b.
[245] The Wolfhound also performed at concerts organised by groups concerned with internment and civil rights movements, for example a Lurgan Civil Disobedience Campaign event in May 1972 (Untitled, *The Lurgan Campaigner*, date and volume unclear, p. 3).
[246] Von Tangen Page, p. 58.

Songs such as this could have been an emotional substitute for active service and reminder that, even if there was no fighting to return to, they had taken part.

Collective use of political music by republicans was not only a feature of imprisonment at Long Kesh. UVF prisoner William 'Plum' Smith describes how, in Belfast Prison "at the weekend the internees would gather and have a sing song where they would sing all the IRA songs and ballads. Being a Protestant I had never heard these songs before but after a few weeks I knew more Republican songs than the average IRA man on the outside."[247] The last line points to the importance of the prison in reinforcing, even generating, commitment to and participation in republican cultural expression. Smith may be correct that "the average IRA man on the outside" wouldn't know as many of the movement's songs as an individual exposed to republican paramilitary prisoners or internees, as the experience of imprisonment, both ideologically and in terms of its deprivations, strengthened the need for these songs. This effect was even stronger in Long Kesh, due to the higher numbers of paramilitary prisoners and the greater degree to which they were exposed to each other in larger groups, in comparison to the cellular Belfast Prison.

The sharing and strengthening of republican music within the prison can be situated in a wider context of republican prison education and instruction that began to develop in the early 1970s and continued through the further decades of imprisonment. As stated above, the prison population grew from around 600 in the late 1960s to 3,000 in 1979.[248] These new prisoners were largely young, and while many were deeply rooted in a political tradition and related cultural practices, others were not. Similar to the Tartan gang members mentioned in the previous chapter, many of this new generation of republican prisoners had developed their interests and hobbies according to the prevailing trends and tastes enjoyed by young people

[247] Smith, p. 31.
[248] McEvoy, p. 17.

across the UK, Ireland and further afield. They had come into the movement via communal violence or peer relationships rather than, or combined with, a gold-plated republican pedigree.

Nevertheless, much more experienced and long-standing republicans, from whom they could learn, were also interned and sentenced during the same period. As one former republican prisoner interviewed by Shirlow and McEvoy describes: 'When I was in, in the 1970s, most of the lads knew as much about Coventry City football team than they did about Cu Chuhulain. These lads were into T-Rex and wearing their hair long. Then a few years after being in they were into all things Irish. See when they came in they met people who were steeped in Republicanism, so they had fellahs there who could teach them Irish history and that sort of thing.'[249] This cultural exchange was hugely significant to the development of republican prison culture, both musical and far wider. As will be seen below, these younger prisoners were not required to dispense with T-Rex or their long hair, but rather a more dynamic fusion of republican political dogma and culture with mainstream influences was born, reflective of this new demographic of republican paramilitary prisoner and their varied needs.

Along with discussions facilitated by their environment, this nascent republican prison education and cultural programme included reading groups and lectures. A board of visitors report from 10th April 1972 highlighted that in Compound 2 "there was a lecture in progress here it was well attended and conducted. The subjects being discussed were varied Socialism, Stock Exchange and Capitalism."[250] Reading material found in the Maze as it closed in 2000 revealed the ideological developments that began during this period. In the IRA collection:

> "There are at least 11 copies of Lenin's The State and the Revolution, one carefully re-covered in a smoothed-out brown paper bag. There are also

[249] Shirlow and McEvoy, pp. 144-145.
[250] Extract from Board of Visitors Journal, 10 April 1972. NIO/12/27A.

> numerous copies of Marx and Engels' Manifesto of the Communist Party, and works by Freud, Trotsky, Kafka and Mao Zedong. There are biographies of Margaret Thatcher, Enoch Powell and Ian Paisley, and books on Nicaragua, El Salvador, Guatemala, Palestine, South Africa and the Basque separatists. Frantz Fanon's classic anti-colonial text, The Wretched of the Earth, sits beside Henry Pelling's Origins of the Labour Party and works by the Brazilian theorist Paolo Freire."[251]

This emphasis on reading, education and knowledge of wider movements appears to have been a more organised exercise for republican prisoners, but was not limited to them. Key UVF figure Gusty Spence also sets out the importance of reading and discussing history during his time in Belfast Prison in the 1960s and Long Kesh in the 1970s, particularly regarding his understanding of the Irish Catholic experience.[252]

This library developed over the three decades of imprisonment at Long Kesh/ Maze: however, the seeds of this process of simultaneously strengthening understanding of Irish republicanism while locating it within a wider global, left-wing context were sown during the early years. This had implications far beyond this period: "The transition in Republicanism from violence to non-violent strategies was influenced by a self-conscious reshaping of Republican ideology in the prisons from the 1970s onwards," write Shirlow and McEvoy: "What emerged was predominantly class-based in terms of the Republican electorate but the cohesion to this emergent consciousness was provided by Republican narratives of colonialism, Irish culture and music, the realities of oppression, and a promised ultimate delivery from British authority."[253] Alongside this focus on Irish culture and music was the development of a perceived alignment between that culture and other anti-capitalist, nationalistic or post-colonial movements in South America, Vietnam, South Africa, and regarding civil rights in the United States. Irish music was

[251] 'Men of letters, men of arms,' *The Guardian Saturday Review*, 2 December 2000, p. 1 cols. A-g; p. 2 cols. a-e.
[252] Garland, pp. 86 - 88; 112 - 114; 170 - 175.
[253] Shirlow and McEvoy, p. 144.

closely guarded, and its boundaries patrolled, but its role as a totem of Irish nationalism could be used effectively in terms of global support and solidarity when categorised alongside other nationalistic or political musical canons. The initial phases of this process had begun with the connections drawn between Irish nationalist music and that of the global civil rights movement, and it remains a theme of various community events to this day.[254] Irish republicanism as one counter-cultural movement amongst many was reflected back to the movement by more mainstream artists, particularly in the early 1970s, as will be seen in Chapter Five.

Influenced by Spence, UVF and RHC prisoners also held debates on international issues, including one recalled by Billy Hutchinson in 1975 on the question of a federal Europe and its potential impact on the loyalist and republican movements.[255] This is an important counterpoint to the impression that prison-based political development and education was solely the domain of republicans. Nevertheless, these debates appear to have been more locally-focused, developing into a class-based analysis of loyalism and unionism which eventually manifested in the Progressive Unionist Party, rather than attempts to situate the movement in a more global tendency.[256]

Smash Internment: Live from Long Kesh.

The most concrete example of prison-based musical production from the internment period is the 1972 record *Smash Internment and Injustice: Live recording in Long Kesh*. The back cover proclaimed "this record has been made from tapes which were recorded and smuggled out of

[254] West Belfast's Féile an Phobail, established in 1988 and still running, is the most prominent example of a community event that showcases Irish republican culture alongside international music and more mainstream ensembles.
[255] Edwards, p. 145.
[256] Ibid., pp. 146-148.

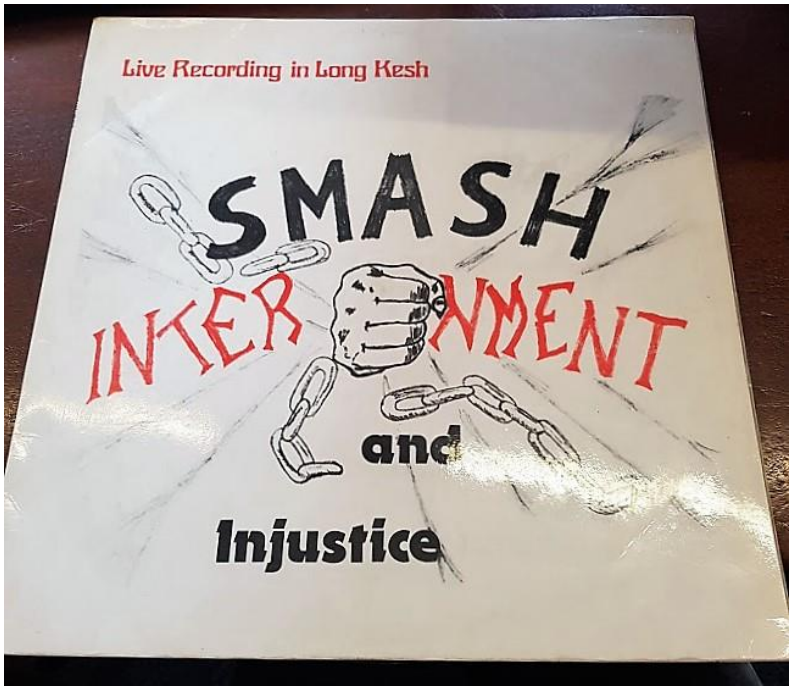
"Long Kesh" Britain's largest internment camp in Northern Ireland." Songs credited to "The Internees" are combined with other credits, including Co. Tyrone-based country singer Philomena Begley. The purpose and intended effect of this record upon the listener is also explicitly stated, in emotive detail:

> "The Artistes are among the best in Ireland. Not only that but week after week they have given their services free in order to raise funds to help the dependants of those so unjustly imprisoned. The Concert took place in a corrugated iron hut. The 'captive' audience numbered over one hundred. At the time of the recording they had already been interned for some months but their wonderful spirit - that unconquered and unconquerable spirit of the Irish people - can be heard in their laughter, in their applause and in their magnificent rendering of "The Boys of The Old Brigade" - the Internees Anthem. It is this spirit prevailing through the recording which makes this record unique. Now lean back, close your eyes, picture in your mind a 'nissen' hut packed with some of Ireland's finest sons - as young as 17 - as old as 75. This was the first break in their solitude. The Artistes are welcomed with such fervour. The atmosphere is electric with emotion - for artistes as well as audience. The concert begins…"[257]

Alongside extracts from the Special Powers Act, the album's back cover states that "All proceeds of this record are donated for relief work to the Tyrone Co-ordinating Relief Committee." This record is instructive on how music was performed during the internment period, and how prisoners conceived of and portrayed this performance as both personal experience and political statement. It also shows the ability of music to break through the boundaries of prison walls to agitate for communal and practical support. This did not go unnoticed by prison authorities, and efforts were made to curtail the possibility of it happening again. A Board of Visitors report from 13th December 1974 stated that "a request was made for a Christmas concert with outside artists," to which the Governor responded: "I could not recommend this, it had been tried on a previous occasion, afterwards a record had been released

[257] *Smash Internment and Injustice: Live Recording in Long Kesh.*

which it was claimed was made in the compounds," presumably referring to *Smash Internment.*[258]



Smash Internment album, Linen Hall Library, (April 2018)

The songs included on the record indicate prisoners' focus on Irish republican and nationalist culture combined with the linking of this culture with wider movements. As Millar states, the internees sang songs including "Óró sé do bheatha abhaile," "We Shall Overcome," and Paddy McGuigan's "The Boys of the Old Brigade." This selection well illustrates the sense of continuity republicans were trying to create, between an Irish traditional song adapted and given new words by republican revolutionary Padraig Pearse; the international Civil Rights anthem; and the new phase of resistance represented by McGuigan's "Boys of the Old Brigade," which itself points to the past so as to contextualize and explain the present."[259] In this regard, *Smash*

[258] Board of Visitors, 13 December 1974, p. 3. NIO/12/27A.
[259] Millar, 'Irish republican music', 2017, pp. 83-84.

Internment was a reflection of the various forces that political music had brought to bear upon republican prison culture. It also commandeered musical representation of those forces as a statement of intent on what republicanism and its cultural expression ought to be.

Making-do: Handicrafts and the use of musical symbols in identity construction.

The processes described above that linked republican prison culture with both wider Irish traditional music and global movements shaped the emotional community and regime of the movement's prison-based cultural expression. The building blocks included books, songs, instruments, records and lecture subjects. The totems, themes and tropes were not limited by prison walls but were in fact transmitted outwards and absorbed by the wider movement, literally via the *Smash Internment* record or more abstractly, through the shifts in political culture described by Shirlow and McEvoy. This process also established the imagery and artefacts which represented and featured in this cultural production: the images of Long Kesh on the *Men Behind the Wire* album, for example, or particular musical instruments.

One of the ways in which these key images and artefacts were established was through the making of handicrafts, itself a means of passing the time and transmitting and reinforcing political commitment. Various objects were produced, including artworks, crosses, bags and purses, made to order, for general sale or to be distributed to supporters or key figures as gifts, establishing communal links. Music had some influence on these items, and the presence of harps or drums made by prisoners at fundraising events or in homes helped reinforce musical instruments as political symbols. These items were made with varying degrees of formality and sanction. They are examples of what Goffman terms "make-dos," the phenomenon in which "in every social establishment participants use available artifacts in a manner and for an end not officially intended, thereby modifying the conditions of life programmed for these individuals,"

harnessed for wider political significance as well as more quotidian subversion.[260] Similar to musical production, the creation of handicrafts had a dual function, in that the objects could "articulate both personal and propaganda meaning."[261]

Former republican prisoner Laurence McKeown describes this as an "expropriation of resources," recalling how "resources originally in the form of prison furniture and such like eventually left the prison in the form of Celtic crosses and harps, jewellery boxes and coffee tables to be raffled outside and the proceeds given to the Green Cross. Eventually this consumption of prison resources progressed to the dismantling of doors and door frames, tables and desks. The high quality of mahogany wood from the latter made excellent harps."[262] McKeown's terminology emphasises the inherent rebelliousness in the idea that material intended to hold these prisoners left the prison moulded by their hands into symbols of Irish nationalism such as the harp. This is an example of "everyday tools manipulated by users," highlighted as a key feature of subtle, quotidian subversion and assertion of autonomy by de Certeau.[263] The presence of these crafts on display in family homes or community spaces, and their connection to prisoner welfare organisation the Green Cross, further embedded imprisonment, beginning with internment, into domestic and communal life. As Burton observes, "the socially inclusive effects of internment and sentenced imprisonment is much evidenced by the prestige attached to the various 'Long Kesh' crafts," which were simultaneously symbols of resistance and support and, in their fundraising capacity, of

[260] Goffman, p. 187.
[261] McAtackney, p. 276. See also Hinson, Erin, 'Crafting Identities: Prison artefacts and place-making in pre- and post-ceasefire Northern Ireland', in Komarova, Milena and Maruška Svašek (Eds.), *Ethnographies of movement, sociality and space: Place-making in the new Northern Ireland* (New York, NY: Berghahn Books, 2018), 60-84, for a detailed study of the production of handicrafts by UVF/RHC prisoners, and the relation of this practice to group identity and the spatial reality of the Long Kesh compound.
[262] McKeown, Laurence, *Out of Time: Irish Republican Prisoners, Long Kesh 1972 - 2000*, (Belfast: Beyond the Pale, 2001), p. 105.
[263] De Certeau, p. 21.

attempting to alleviate the poverty experienced by many of the "temporary one-parent families" that imprisonment caused.[264]

Loyalists and republicans have their own lexicon of instruments and musical tropes, with arguably as much symbolic as sonic importance. It is perhaps not surprising, therefore, that loyalists made small decorative drums and republicans made harps. Prisoners also painted and modified these for maximum impact. Loyalist drums were painted with union jacks and the red hand of Ulster, UDA/ UFF badges and, later, images of the H-Blocks, demonstrating that prison imagery, so thoroughly incorporated into republican tropes, was not solely their preserve. One harp made by republicans in Long Kesh in 1974 and gifted to the family of a sympathetic solicitor appears to have had its strings broken on purpose, perhaps to convey despair, damage or isolation.[265] It also evokes the 19th-century Thomas Moore composition *The Harp That Once Through Tara's Halls*, in which the silence and ruin of the eponymous harp symbolises English dominance over the once great Ireland. This practice demonstrates how musical elements can symbiotically function as emblems in themselves, and as the transmitter of others. It shows that is not only the lyrical or even sonic parts of music that can carry out this role, but all manifestations of the entire, interrelated network of musical forms and features. In the years following the peace process and release of the vast majority of politically-motivated prisoners, this pragmatic-symbolic feature of music and related artefacts has come full circle, with functional rather than decorative instruments, particularly bodhráns and guitars, which were made and/ or used in prison now displayed alongside their ornamental counterparts as relics rather than active tools.[266]

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[264] Burton, Frank, *The Politics of Legitimacy: Struggles in a Belfast Community*, (London: Routledge & Kegan Paul Ltd., 1978), pp. 20-21.
[265] Held at the Linen Hall Library.
[266] See the collection of the Eileen Hickey Irish Republican History Museum in the Conway Mill area of the Falls Road, including bodhráns made by republicans in Portlaoise, and harps and guitars from Long Kesh/ Maze.

Guitar signed by Long Kesh prisoners, Eileen Hickey Irish Republican History Museum, Belfast (May 2016)

A Loyalist Prisoner's Call: **Loyalist songs and song books produced in prison.**

"Singing and marching everyone": Representations of contemporary events.

While they appear to not have distributed recorded music, loyalist prisoners produced various song books and lyrics. The *UDA Detainee Song Book*, "compiled, written and published in Cage 14, Long Kesh, 1974" and intended for sale for 25p, contains many pieces related to prison life and wider paramilitary issues. Some are explicitly antagonistic, such as *Bloody Sunday* ("Knew I'd get a taig before lunch/ Hey, hey, hey it's a beautiful day") and *Battle of Bombay Street* ("We took a little petrol/ And took a little gun, and we fought the/ Bloody fenians, till we had

them/ On the run.")[267] Both deal with real-life events involving violence towards Catholics. The so-called "battle of Bombay Street" took place during the extreme rioting of mid-August 1969, in which hundreds of residents of that area of west Belfast were forced to leave their homes. It is noteworthy that this particular "UDA detainee," as the author is described, claims "we" behaved in such a way, despite the events taking place some three years before the organisation was founded. This establishes a clear connection between the UDA and the rioters, promoting the former's legitimacy as grassroots defenders of their people. The song is an example of self-aggrandisement through a show of strength and corresponding weakness in the enemy, as seen in the line "the I.R.A. they trembled in their boots." This back-slapping and bravado is further reinforced with the claim that "when the fun was over and the/ Battle had been won, then we started/ Singing and marching everyone," underlining the importance of song and related behaviour to camaraderie and displays of dominance.

The significance of singing is also clear in *Rocky's Song*, written by James "Rocky" Burns in Belfast Prison in 1972 and published in various loyalist song books, including *The Orange Cross*. The song uses political singing and parading as a sign of liberty, with the narrator stating: "There's many a song has been written/ Of home and lands far away/ But I long to parade up the Shankill/ To the strains of our own Dolly's Brae."[268] While any prisoner would long for home, or for a significant place such as the Shankill for loyalists, this nostalgia for parading may have been stronger for Burns in Belfast Prison in 1972 than if he had been held in the Long Kesh compounds with more of his comrades and the ability to approximate parades. The song also appears to cast aspersions on those who enjoy popular music instead of, or more than, the political-traditional canon, with one verse enthusing "Some sing the Country and Western/ The songs of the famed Johnny Cash/ But give me the favourite of Ulster/ Need I say it? That song is

[267] *UDA Detainee Song Book*, (no page numbers.)
[268] *The Orange Cross Book of Songs Poems and Verse*, (no page numbers.)

the SASH." These lyrics suggest an emphasis on cultural purity, at least for this narrator, more in line with that historically associated with republicans.[269] It also underlines the significance of *The Sash* to this body of music. *Rocky's Song* stands out for its overtly Orange references, absent from the *UDA Detainee Song Book*, including to the Orange lily, "Master" and a collarette.

Regarding *Bloody Sunday,* the use of the first-person in the line "Taigs to the army said it was you/ Didn't know that I was there too," suggests a statement of solidarity and attempts to link loyalist identity and goals with the Parachute Regiment. The Saville inquiry into the events of 30th January 1972, in which fourteen civilians died as a result of shooting by the British army at a civil rights protest in Londonderry, also found evidence of loyalist intention to "interfere" with the civil rights march and stage their own counter-protest.[270] *Bloody Sunday* does not use rhetoric of defence or diminished responsibility resulting from being forced into violence, as other pieces in the same collection do. *The Battle of Bombay Street* refers to the IRA as the enemy, as do other songs such as *Goodbye my Loyal Friend* and *A Loyalist Prisoner's Call*, implying a justification for the violent imagery they use, whereas in this case the enemy is merely defined as "taigs," suggesting indiscriminate opposition to and hatred of Catholics in general.

[269] Links are made between country and western as a genre and loyalist music (See Wilson), although these associations are fairly loose. The genre's popularity is not limited to those of a unionist or loyalist perspective, and indeed the localised sub-genre "Country and Irish" mixes country and western with aspects of Irish music and culture that would not be claimed by loyalism. References to Johnny Cash may be a nod to links with country and western, or a recognition of the connection between Cash and prison music, following his famous live performances at Folsom Prison and San Quentin in the 1960s.
[270] The Report of the Bloody Sunday Inquiry, HC 29, Vol. 1, p. 376, 9.458.

By loyalists, for loyalists: Local limits.

The theme of loyalty, and the unfairness of imprisonment for it, is prevalent throughout *The UDA Detainee Song Book*. One piece, *The Shankill*, makes this view extremely clear in the verse "Internment it started and in went the/ Prods, but it didn't break our true/ Loyal cause/ For fighting for Ulster, and doing our/ Job, we were put in Long Kesh, for/ Being true loyal Prods.[271]" This suggests no feelings of contradiction regarding committing crimes to protect the security of the state. Rather, the song suggests, the UDA is right to persevere in the face of internment and imprisonment, and the government wrong for inflicting it upon them. A similar defiance is expressed in *Branded Man*, which speaks more to the personal difficulties of being "branded" a prisoner, and thus a criminal, and the resulting need to emphasise the righteousness of protecting and defending one's community.

The songs in the *UDA Detainee Song Book* appear with the instruction "To the tune of…" For example, *Bloody Sunday* is to the tune of *Beautiful Sunday*, and *Goodbye my Loyal Friend* to that of *Seasons in the Sun*. It is not possible to quantify to what degree they were performed rather than read: this likely varied depending on the familiarity of the tune and catchy or long-winded nature of the lyrics. Another publication from inside Long Kesh/ Maze, *A Special Category: Book of Poem and Verse*, "compiled in Long Kesh by a Red Hand Commando-UVF Prisoner of War," seems to have been produced in a similar way, without the musical element.[272] As my focus is music, I will not analyse verse that appears to have been defined and experienced as poetry, of which there were also numerous examples from republican prisoners, including in *Faoí Glas.*

[271] *UDA Detainee Song Book*, (no page numbers.)
[272] *A Special Category: Book of Poem and Verse*, front cover.

These song books are notable both for what they highlight as key to loyalist paramilitary identity, and what they do not. They are extremely locally-focused, in the subject matter and language used, for example, "fenians" and the discussion of specific episodes of communal violence, Orange imagery and repeated reference to the IRA. It is difficult to imagine an audience for the songs above outwith committed UDA supporters or members; nor is there any sense that a wider audience would be considered. While they do include historical themes, neither the *UDA Detainee Song Book* nor *A Special Category* combine loyalist-focused songs with more outward-looking pieces signifying connections to other global movements, comparable to the republican internees' use of *We Shall Overcome*.

This more myopic focus may reflect the prisoners' desire to get back to active involvement in paramilitary activity, or a bitterness resulting from incarceration. However, it is also representative of general loyalist cultural production outside the prison. "Loyalist songs are products of a marginalised and self-referential world," Wilson writes, adding that "preaching to the converted, and sung in crowded, smoke-filled loyalist drinking clubs, the songs attempted to boost the morale and reinforce the solidarity of communities who believed that the whole world was against them - Irish Catholics and their Third World sympathizers, untrustworthy and unreliable British politicians, the powerful Irish American lobby, liberal media types, and condescending academics."[273] This suggests that the more republican culture looked outward, the more that of loyalists turned inward, and the former's musical overtures to movements such as the US civil rights campaign contributed to the loyalist sense of besiegement and ghettoisation. One song, entitled *The Battle of A-Wing* and published in the loyalist prisoner-related publication *The Orange Cross,* makes its intended audience clear with the accompanying note "composed, written and published exclusively in 'A' Wing, Belfast Jail, Crumlin Road, by

[273] Wilson, p. 196; p. 204.

Loyalists, about Loyalists, for Loyalists everywhere."[274] These cultural forces would develop and harden as the conflict went on. The examples addressed here suggest their foundations were already laid in the prison musical production of the early to mid-1970s.

Power struggles and parades.

UVF parading: Demonstrating legitimacy and discipline.

Another key practice involving music and sound that established and consolidated political prisoner identity in Long Kesh was that of parading. While handicrafts sent musical symbols out from the prison into the communal and domestic space, parading brought symbols of wider cultural identity into prison life. This was a particularly prominent feature of compound culture for loyalists. The UVF in particular prided itself on discipline and military behaviour. Prisoners in the loyalist compounds would make flags, bannerettes and other insignia, as well as acquire or make elements of their own uniform, such as all black outfits, in order to recreate a paramilitary parade as far as possible within the limited space. This was directly related to the freedoms of the Special Category period, mainly freedom of association and the right to refuse prison uniform.

From early 1973, Spence encouraged parades and military exercises amongst UVF prisoners as a means of instilling a sense of being "prisoners of war" and members of a legitimate military force, rather than criminals.[275] The aforementioned EPIC document includes an interview with one former UVF prisoner who describes how, at Spence's behest:

[274] 'The Battle of 'A' Wing', *The Orange Cross*, 12 July 1972, No. 6, no page numbers.
[275] Edwards, p. 141; Taylor, 1999, p. 141.

> "we ran round the compounds so many times, did fitness exercises and then we washed and shaved. After that we cleaned our bed space and huts, folded all our bedclothes and then dressed in the UVF uniform of black polo neck, black trousers, black coat and cap comforter. At one time we got in a consignment of cheap army boots and we put studs on them for the actual drill. We started having marching parades and roll call. As far as the marching aspect of it was concerned, we were probably as good as some of the top drill companies in the British army as we were practising everyday."[276]

Similarly, Smith recalls the smuggling of small balls into the UVF compound in order to achieve the requisite clicking sound from prisoners' boots.[277] The desire to establish symbolic links between the original Ulster Volunteer Force and the new UVF heavily influenced this military aspect, due to the significance of the former's role in the First World War. Spence's father had been in the original UVF, and his military service had a significant impact upon his son.[278] Spence's own army experience was formative in his politics and sense of history and, perhaps unexpectedly, furnished him with a sense of a dual, compatible Irish and British heritage: "St Patrick's Day was a big day in the Ulster Rifles," he recalls, adding that "we marched to two tunes: an Orange song, 'The Sash my Father Wore', and a republican song, 'Kelly the Boy from Killan', representing both traditions in a cultural sense."[279] This broader view of unionism and identity would be seen in Spence's contribution to the loyalist ceasefires of the 1990s.

More broadly, drilling and parading asserts politically-motivated prisoner identity: ordinary prisoners, while they may exercise, do not behave in this way, and therefore participants are

[276] Green, p. 11.
[277] Smith, p. 60.
[278] Garland, pp. 6-7.
[279] Ibid., p. 31. This anecdote may suggest that political music was not so tightly bound to its ethno-nationalist community in the years preceding the conflict: Spence was in the Royal Ulster Rifles from 1957 - 61, a time in which an army regiment singing *Kelly, the Boy from Killane* was likely less controversial than some ten or fifteen years later. It may also reflect the more complex nature of events such as the 1798 Rebellion referenced in this song than allowed for by a strict ethno-nationalist division of culture and heritage.

clearly different, whether or not that was officially recognised. There could also have been an impetus to draw clear lines between paramilitary prisoners and prison staff. The uniforms and drilling meant this was clearly paramilitary parading, perhaps influenced by but visually clearly distinct from the Orange tradition, which became more prominent amongst loyalist prisoners in the 1980s and 1990s.

Drills or debates: Republican culture wars.

Republicans also conducted drilling exercises in the Long Kesh compound, although these were a more controversial aspect of their prison culture than those of the UVF. Clarke writes that "Gerry Adams was struck by the contrast when he became a sentenced prisoner after his attempt to escape from internment. Expecting to spend his days 'learning Irish and reading' he found that the 'republican regime was very severe, parades and drills and all that went with it, to a degree which I for one found excessive' and that although there was a programme of lectures in operation there was 'a lack of consistent political discussion'."[280] Much of the republican focus on drilling and military discipline appeared to derive from a senior IRA figure in the prison: "a former British soldier from Newry, David Morley, a martinet who modelled his management style on the military code most familiar to him; the IRA cages in Long Kesh during Morley's command, Hughes complained, were run like a British military barracks," Moloney writes, based on interviews with former IRA prisoner Brendan Hughes.[281] Martin Meehan, Morley's adjutant, felt they were copying the regime run by Spence in the compound nearby, and resented that "we were playing the same game as loyalism."[282] Hughes heavily objected to imitating the British army in this manner, and describes how Morley and his influence was eventually

[280] Clarke, p. 56.
[281] Moloney, Ed, *Voices from the Grave: Two Men's War in Ireland*, (London: Faber and Faber, 2010), p 186.
[282] Garland, p. 158.

overturned by Adams and fellow prisoner Ivor Bell, in part through the foothold Adams established via his lectures and prison writing.[283]

Adams' comments and the divisions reported by Hughes are instructive for various reasons, particularly the suggestion of a cultural struggle within prison-based republicanism between a military strand and a more intellectual tendency. This contrasts with the apparently smooth development of left-wing, progressive thinking amongst republican prisoners that is often suggested by prisoners' memoirs and biographies, not least in the writing of Adams himself. Whalen writes that "Adams was at the forefront of the evolution of the Provisionals away from the physical-force-only school of the earlier leadership. The Republicans imprisoned subsequent to Adams remained in the vanguard pushing Provisionalism in a direction that decentered armed struggle," and places the musical and cultural production of the H-Blocks as integral to this progress that Adams' prison writings began.[284] As Moloney, building on Hughes, suggests, the ideological ousting of Morley by Adams et al and their wider conception and shaping of prison culture can be seen as the beginning of the Adams era of the republican movement, which would dominate the following decades.[285] However, this was not unobstructed nor inevitable, in the prison or more broadly. Tensions between these tendencies reflected "the variety of ideological currents which have been subsumed under the Republican banner," as described by Moxon-Browne, who adds: "like a typical "nationalist" movement, Republicanism has managed to attract adherents from a wide social spectrum - soldiers, scholars, workers - and to include (although uneasily) fascist and socialist tendencies within its ranks."[286]

[283] Moloney, pp. 193-205.
[284] Whalen, 2014, p. 143.
[285] Ibid, p. 207.
[286] Moxon-Browne, E., 'The Water and the Fish: Public Opinion and the Provisional IRA in Northern Ireland', *Terrorism,* Vol. 5 Nos. 1-2, 1981. 41-72, p. 48.

Moreover, Moloney places the intra-republican struggle to gain control of prison culture in the wider context of "the combined effort of Gerry Adams, Ivor Bell and Brendan Hughes to put in place organisational and political changes to rescue and rejuvenate the IRA" in the mid-1970s.[287] This context is a useful counterpoint to a tendency to romanticise republican cultural production and under-emphasise the paramilitary element within it, seen in texts such as Whalen's. There was clearly a robust interest in wider ideological issues and global movements involved in the ideas and cultural expression generated in the Long Kesh compound and carried forward. These were intertwined with a practical focus on strengthening the objectives of physical force republicanism inside and outside the prison. This was particularly the case during the 1970s, before a concerted move towards an electoral strategy. Discussing the "republican socialism" and anti-colonial aspects of Adams' and other prisoners' writings from 1977, English notes that contemporary republican "political thought involved a combination of socialist politics and violent aggression."[288] The paramilitary, violent element was fully integrated into the music that surrounded it, rather than "decentred" as the movement progressed towards peace.[289] This strengthened the significance of politically-motivated prisoners' cultural production to the wider movement: commitment to and full acceptance, even glorification of violent activity was another factor in the amalgamation that made this canon so potent, alongside and intertwined with more intellectual, less violent ideals of progress, emancipation and resistance, and by no means subordinate to them.

Prison was also transformative for the loyalist leadership established by Spence who, like Adams, pursued political reading and education and eventually encouraged a turn away from

[287] Moloney, p. 183. It should be noted that Gerry Adams has always denied IRA membership, but nonetheless has clearly been a key figure in the wider republican movement.
[288] English, p. 216.
[289] In fact, from the vantage point of 2019 I would argue that rebel music is one of the cultural elements keeping republican violent imagery alive, despite the political movement having moved on. See Millar, 2018.

physical force activity within his own movement. Taylor traces Spence's political development back to a recording made inside Long Kesh around Easter 1974, when "Gusty was ill and sent from gaol to Musgrave Park hospital to undergo major surgery. At some stage, the enterprising patient managed to get hold of a tape recorder and he smuggled it back into the prison to the admiration and delight of his men."[290] This tape recorder was used to send a message on personal and political matters to the mother of Spence's son-in-law. While this anecdote indicates similar practices to those of republicans, that is making do with whatever was to hand to transmit messages through prison walls, it is notable precisely for its lack of musical content. Republicans produced two illicit recordings inside Long Kesh/ Maze: the aforementioned *Smash Internment* and 1991's *Music from the Blocks*, for which they obtained equipment in a similar fashion. Both recordings were almost entirely musical in nature. Taylor's reference to the tape recorder acquired by Spence is brief and it is therefore possible that it was used for musical recordings, although I have found no suggestion of that. Garland reports that *The Ballad of Gusty Spence*, sometimes entitled *The Sprung Volunteer*, was "sung by loyalist prisoners in Long Kesh in 1975 and captured on tape by Winston Rea."[291] However, it is unclear how this tape was made or how it could be accessed. This suggests that music played a far more central role in both the development of paramilitary prison culture for republican prisoners, and in transmitting that culture outside.

There were varied musical and sonic elements to these cultural events and the competing conceptions of paramilitary culture they represented, from the use of ball-bearings on parade to the connections drawn with other movements and musicians by republican musical references. The paramilitary prison culture that developed from these tensions and practices set the scene for the respective movements' musical expression for the following decades of paramilitary

[290] Taylor, 1999, p. 139.
[291] Garland, p 152.

imprisonment. This includes the global, counter-cultural perception promoted by Adams' strand of republicanism and the greater emphasis on parading and markedly more locally-focused, overtly paramilitary iconography established by the Long Kesh UVF and UDA. The internees' record, UDA song book, parading and the communal presence of prison-produced handicrafts suggests an easily-transgressed boundary between inside and outside practices. This had clear parallels in the fact that political ideas and figures which achieved prominence in the prison did not have their influence contained by prison walls, but rather began to resonate in the wider movement. The prison was a powerhouse of political and cultural production during the early to mid-1970s, and the ideas that were established, transmitted and reinforced by paramilitary prison culture during this period came to influence that of their wider movements.

Cultural amalgamation: Emotional outlets, codes and signalling.

Along with the paramilitary and the intellectual, the final strand in the triumvirate of influences on this new republican prison culture was the mainstream or the popular. As suggested above, prisoners and internees in their late 'teens and early twenties who entered Long Kesh in the early to mid-1970s brought with them mainstream musical and cultural tastes, in many cases more developed than their interest in or knowledge of republican culture. This popular culture was not necessarily embraced by all those of an earlier generation. Whalen describes Adams' short story *The Night Andy Warhol was Banned*, in which a generational divide develops over sex scenes shown on the communal television, as revealing "the impact of prison-born conscientização on the traditional power structures of the Republican movement," referring to Freire's ideas of consciousness-raising and critical thought.[292] Modern popular music and its cultural accoutrements may have created or exposed a similar rift. I would suggest that, in Adams' story

[292] Whalen, 2007, p. 45.

at least, the degree to which the younger, more liberal prisoners actually affect traditional republican power structures is limited, as they are successfully prevented from watching the offending show.[293] Rather, this disagreement reflects the long-standing tension in Irish nationalism and republicanism between an emphasis on cultural purity and even asceticism, embodied in de Valera and Pearse and espoused by these older republicans in Long Kesh, and the more outward-looking, social (often socialist) minded strand, running through James Connolly, Peadar O'Donnell and Adams himself. What Adams' story in fact reveals is the boundaries against which this more progressive strand was permitted to push to a certain point, before falling back into deference to history and hierarchy when it was deemed to have gone too far.

Despite these constraints, popular music was a common feature of life in Long Kesh. Memoirs and biographies that refer to the musical tastes of Northern Irish politically-motivated prisoners in the recent conflict suggest they were relatively in line with what would be expected of young people during the period. References are mostly to well-known artists and songs in the pop, rock and folk-rock genres, particularly from the UK and North America. In O'Hearn's biography of Sands, he notes he played albums including David Bowie's *Aladdin Sane* and swapped records by Wings, The Eagles, Neil Young and Bob Dylan with fellow prisoners.[294] Sands regularly played guitar, and would play Kris Kristofferson's *Me and Bobby McGee* on "bodhran drum, tin whistle and banjo."[295] "While Davis and Pearse might have shuddered," Whalen comments, "Sands's generation embraced such musical amalgamation with gusto."[296]

[293] Adams, 1990, p. 126.
[294] O'Hearn, 2006, p. 57; p. 73.
[295] O'Hearn, p. 73; Beresford, p. 61. Adams somewhat undermines the romantic connotations of these images with the remark "some POWs sing or play musical instruments, which is one of the reasons why others try to escape." (1990, p. 18)
[296] Whalen, 2014, p. 135.

This fusion appears to have caused little controversy with older republicans, outwith general grumbling and disagreement over taste, a particular issue due to the spatial layout of the compounds. Whalen refers to the likely rose-tinted eulogising of Sands' guitar skills following his death, noting that "in a crowded space like the Cages of Long Kesh where thirty or forty men could share a single hut, a novice guitar player with such determination could cause friction."[297] This lack of privacy was also felt by loyalist prisoners. Smith recalls how, in comparison to the open-plan Nissen huts, the cellular system at Belfast Prison "meant that you could retire to your own cell anytime and read a book or listen to your own radio."[298]

Unlike Adams' admittedly fictionalised account of television use, I have found no reference to popular, mainstream music being "banned" or restricted by prisoners due to apolitical or offensive content. This may suggest an understanding, conscious or otherwise, that this musical outlet did not undermine the centrality of republican culture to prisoners' lives, but ultimately protected it. Valid, pressing emotional needs could be met without bending republican culture out of shape, in attempting to respond to complex contexts for which it simply could not fully account.

Popular music was thus what Reddy has termed an "emotional refuge" in relation to the emotional regime of the wider political musical culture of paramilitary imprisonment.[299] No matter how well-developed, gaps in such systems often appear, necessitating an emotional refuge, defined as "a relationship, ritual, or organization (whether informal or formal) that provides safe release from prevailing emotional norms and allows relaxation of emotional effort, with or without an ideological justification, which may shore up or threaten the existing

[297] Ibid., p. 132.
[298] Smith, p. 43.
[299] Reddy, p. 129.

emotional regime."[300] De Valera, along with Whalen's shuddering Pearse and Davis and the conservative prisoners of Adams' tale, may have taken such an outlet as threatening the hegemony of the republican emotional regime. However, the prisoners whose anecdotes are examined here seemed to experience the refuge of popular music as bolstering their wider political commitment: a valve which helped release the substantial pressure of the deprivations of imprisonment upon their unifying cause, keeping the latter as pure and potent as possible.

Concerts and communal performance.

Along with playing instruments and records, one of the ways in which mainstream music bonded prisoners and provided emotional release was through "concerts" and communal performance. These marked calendar events such as Christmas or birthdays, or the arrival or departure of a particular inmate. The concerts planned around fixed events were similar to variety shows, featuring live music performances, skits, impersonations and story-telling. Before and after the protesting periods, these performances had a high level of planning, resources and effort devoted to them. In his autobiography, Adams describes a Christmas Eve concert in Long Kesh in which: "The finale and highlight of the night, which we often reminisced about afterward, consisted of a bunch of prisoners suitably bewigged and costumed miming Freddy Mercury's *A Night At the Opera*, for which Igor, our cage handyman, had concocted a version of dried ice out of crushed tennis balls, which at the appropriate moment in "Bohemian Rhapsody" he released. The intention was to envelop the stage in an atmosphere of suitably theatrical mist."[301]

[300] Ibid., p. 129.
[301] Adams, 1996, p. 242. This presumably describes Christmas Eve 1975, as Queen's *A Night at the Opera* was released in November that year. Adams' recollections tend to cast him as an observer of these performances, rather than an active participant. This could be a narrative device, or due to a lack of interest or talent in singing and dancing. However, it may reflect a feeling, either contemporaneously or

This story demonstrates the importance of popular music as a means of building camaraderie.[302] Such performances were also valuable for providing something to do. Calendar-based concerts offered the prisoners a way of breaking up their time in an otherwise monotonous environment, not only during the event but in the run-up to it, through the preparation of acts, costumes and props. These events also show the high level of freedom and self-governance available to prisoners during the Special Category period. In prison regimes that were more restrictive than that of Long Kesh, the distraction and break from routine provided by concerts could be used as cover or taken advantage of for malicious ends. Edwards describes how "as prisoners enjoyed a musical concert in C Wing" in Crumlin Road in April 1973, Lenny Murphy "was putting a new and more daring escape plan into operation," involving the murder of fellow UVF prisoner and former accomplice, Mervyn Connor, whose cell-mate was watching the concert.[303] In general, however, such concerts could benefit prison management as a means of prisoners safely letting off steam and keeping occupied.

Mainstream music as intramural link.

Prisoners' concerts also suggest a strong link between the prisoner group and its outside organisation. As mentioned above, UVF/RHC prisoners received instruments including electric guitars and a drum kit for Christmas events.[304] The use of records in prison was also a way of maintaining community links that benefitted prisoners. A page in prison-focused loyalist

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while composing his memoirs for publication in the late 1980s and 1990s, that such behaviour was unbecoming in a leader.

[302] Balliger describes popular music as "a social activity, a site of interaction and ideology, a temporary community" (p. 20). This temporary community is valuable in itself, and for the longer-term bonds that can be built through recurring instances or shared memories, as highlighted by Adams' reference to reminiscing later.

[303] Edwards, pp. 63 - 65.

[304] Green, p. 20.

publication *Over the Wire* entitled "Everyone can help" printed the notice: "72 records received for the boys in the Kesh with the compliments of Satans Disco. These will give the boys many hours of enjoyment. Well Done, Satans Disco."[305] Although unclear from the source, it is possible that Satan's Disco was a pub, venue or record store, perhaps suggesting a duty felt by non-prisoner music fans to provide for the needs of their incarcerated counterparts.

Mainstream music could also be used for more practical purposes. UVF/ RHC prisoners used a secret "Long Kesh Radio" to transmit messages from the prison in the mid-1970s.[306] Smith describes how, following a particularly fraught period between prison staff and prisoners in 1976, "I remember asking our radio operator what message had he planned to send if the riot squads had been sent in, SOS? 'No!' he replied. He told me that to avoid any mix up over codes he had agreed with the radio operator on the outside to play the 10CC hit 'Rubber Bullets.'"[307] Similarly, he describes how "we developed a scheme that when we wanted to talk we would continuously play the Eric Burdon and the Animals song, 'We Gotta Get Out of this Place' while our friends on the outside would play the Johnny Cash song 'I Walk the Line.' This worked quite well and enabled us to tune into each other's transmitters."[308]

Smith compares these codes to the use of semaphore, which is also referenced by Adams as having been used to communicate between republican internees' huts and those of sentenced prisoners.[309] The significance of *Rubber Bullets* and *We Gotta Get Out of This Place* is abundantly clear. *I Walk the Line* might be a reference to the vigilance required of paramilitaries outside, or even a territorial or disciplinary reminder to the prisoners of their group membership,

[305] *Over the Wire*, Date unclear.
[306] 'Secret UVF Radio Long Kesh 1977,' Green, back cover.
[307] Smith, p. 156.
[308] Ibid., p. 124.
[309] Adams, 1990, p. 36.

as well as invoking Cash's prison music pedigree. Smith's anecdotes demonstrate the ability of popular music to play a political and pragmatic role for prisoners, and are examples of what Rolston has termed "lyrical drift," where otherwise apolitical or unrelated songs become appropriated for partisan use or meaning in a conflict.[310] They demonstrate the ability of mainstream cultural artefacts to work as 'tells' or totems based on a knowledge of popular culture, in a similar way to those related specifically to the Northern Irish conflict. This possibility indicates the prominence of such mainstream culture in paramilitary prisoners' lives, alongside politically-loaded cultural expression.

Relatability and radical chic: Musical taste as a symbol of character.

References to popular music in prisoners' memoirs and autobiographies also signal certain qualities and affiliations amongst those prisoners. This is a myth-making process, just as when traditional or more overtly political music is used to suggest certain characteristics, values and tropes about the related community. Performers highlighted as significant to Sands such as Bob Dylan, Neil Young and Wings are all popular, mainstream artists, but with a degree of political content in their work. They invoke "radical chic," suggesting fashionable counter-cultural, anti-capitalist and rebellious convictions about themselves and their fans.[311] Neil Young and Bob Dylan were politically engaged, taking stands on issues including the treatment of Native Americans, the Vietnam War and black rights in the United States. Wings' *Give Ireland Back to the Irish* was banned by the BBC.[312] Bowie's *Aladdin Sane* suggests a certain creative, experimental, even intellectual approach to mainstream music. *Me and Bobby McGee*'s lyrical

[310] Rolston, 2001, p. 55.
[311] See Wolfe, Tom, *Radical Chic & Mau-Mauing the Flak Catchers*, (New York: Farrar Straus and Giroux, 1970)
[312] 'When a sausage roll becomes a suspect device', *Irish Examiner*, 9th December 1998, p. 12, col. f.

focus on freedom was likely particularly resonant to prisoners but also reflected a broader counter-cultural tendency.

Conversely, descriptions of a prisoner's taste in popular music could give negative connotations and imply unsavoury characteristics. A former UVF prisoner describes how, whilst sharing a compound in 1973 and 1974 with Lenny Murphy, who would go on to lead the Shankill Butchers, "Murphy had an annoying habit of playing songs by *The Carpenters* over and over again in the compound hut. 'You know who else had a penchant for *The Carpenters*?', asked Geordie. 'Jeffrey Dahmer.' He found Murphy 'creepy.'"[313] This retrospective analysis is likely coloured for both the interviewee and the reader by knowledge of Murphy's brutal murder campaign following this period of imprisonment. Irrespective of its veracity, this anecdote is an example of the use of music-related references to convey certain characteristics and incite emotional responses to them.

Me and Bobby McGee is particularly indicative of how popular music was incorporated into the republican narrative. In both *Cage Eleven* and his autobiography, Adams describes how his experience of the burning of Long Kesh in October 1974 was set against the musical backdrop of Kris Kristofferson's *Me and Bobby McGee*, playing on an LP he had had sent in to him by a friend: "Someone must have been playing it when the trouble started because amidst all the confusion and smoke and flames 'Bobby Magee' was blasting out, and going slower and slower as the heat reached it. That will be one of my abiding memories or the Long Kesh fire."[314] Adams' story is referred to by O'Hearn in his biography of Bobby Sands, with the additional note that it was "one of Bobby's favourite songs."[315] Whether or not this is an accurate

[313] Edwards, p. 160.
[314] Adams, 1990, p. 39; 1996, p. 239.
[315] O'Hearn, 2006, pp. 62 - 63.

recollection, it exemplifies the use of music in republican myth-making: the emotional impact of the song has apparently become entwined with the dramatic, possibly traumatic event of the Long Kesh fire for Adams personally, an effect which is then transferred to the reader. If the reader has some level of sympathy with the republican prisoners, or Adams and Sands specifically, and an awareness of the song and its themes, they will be more emotionally affected by the description of the fire.

Music and memoirs.

Depending on the reader's own musical preferences, claims related to musical taste may contribute to a more empathetic view of the prisoner. Reinforcement is more likely than conversion: the reader who loathes Bobby Sands and all he stood for will almost certainly not change their mind upon discovering he also liked The Eagles. However, a proportion of readers of these memoirs and biographies read them due to some pre-existing sympathy for the central figure or a neutral standpoint. This means personal details such as the music, sports or television they liked make the figure more relatable, perhaps creating a greater level of identification with their wider character, actions and goals. The opposite effect can also be achieved: in the reference to Lenny Murphy, music is used to reinforce a sinister, unsettling image. Aligning him musically with the serial killer Jeffrey Dahmer may suggest that the actions of the Shankill Butchers were more influenced by Murphy's own character flaws than by loyalism, a comfort to a loyalist-sympathising reader who would not wish to be associated with Murphy's actions.

These musical references fit into a wider employment of memoir-writing in "the formation and shaping of the republican movement's collective memory of the Troubles and its self-

presentation," a practice in which Adams has been especially prolific.[316] Similar themes can be seen in loyalist prisoners' memoirs and biographies, although these are far fewer and less cohesive. Hopkins writes: "More critical commentators would point out the folksiness and affected simplicity of Adams' recollections, especially those of his childhood and family, but could agree that they serve a determinedly political purpose," highlighting that "Adams makes no pretence of being a paragon of revolutionary virtue; instead, he presents himself as sharing the same hopes and dreams as the 'plain people' of Ballymurphy," along with their positive and negative traits.[317]

I would posit that Adams presenting himself as "plain" rather than a paragon of virtue is still a calculated construction of a positive image, which was especially useful as he moved onto a global stage and addressed a broader audience than Ballymurphy republicans. Readers outwith that category presumably have some interest in Northern Ireland, republicanism or the peace process if they are engaging with Adams' books, but cannot necessarily relate to him or Sinn Féin on those terms, nor to his images of west Belfast. His references to popular music, dating in his youth, pints and general camaraderie are more universal, and the "folksiness and affected simplicity" makes them just irreverent enough to suggest an appealing character without offending the audience or undermining his leadership qualities. International popular music is a rich vein which can easily be tapped for this purpose: politically-inflected artists suggest rebelliousness, cool and a counter-cultural sensibility, and mainstream music implies an appreciation of a good time, but both are normal enough to be non-threatening.

These references also make the texts more appealing to a wider audience than a dense or harrowing treatise on the intricacies of the republican movement or deprivations of political

[316] Hopkins, 2013, p. 17.
[317] Ibid., p. 31.

imprisonment. "Gerry Adams's tales of Long Kesh made prison life seem like an endless stream of sophomoric jokes: this prisoner hands a guard a ten-pound note, instructing him to pick up a newspaper and a sandwich at a corner shop; that one pretends to be a priest, hearing confession; another parades around naked, leading an imaginary dog on a leash," Kenney describes, which can be seen in anecdotes from *Cage Eleven* above, as well as his prison concert recollections.[318] In terms of imprisonment, this impression of fun-loving young men whose behaviour invokes university halls or sports clubs rather than violent, criminal activity creates a sense that they were far from ordinary criminals and their incarceration was abnormal, even aberrant and unjust. For a broader international audience, the stories could reflect a particular stereotypical construction of "Irishness," based on craic and sing-songs, which is both attractive and situates Sinn Féin, via Adams, as the natural heirs to or embodiment of Irish identity and nationhood.[319]

The incorporation of popular, mainstream music into prison culture and its amalgamation with the political canon seems to have resulted from the demographics of paramilitary prisoners and the way they were imprisoned in the early 1970s, rather than a conscious effort to modernise or broaden the cultural repertoire, although this effect has clearly been useful in later self-presentation. Popular music underpinned the cultural context from which many prisoners had come, and which they needed for emotional expression, entertainment and to maintain their personal identity and sense of self. If paramilitary prison culture intended to retain these members, let alone broaden its reach, it could not consist solely of incessant drilling and lectures on political theory. In order to function as a comprehensive lifestyle, rather than a chore or an activity which stood apart from the rest of the member's life, paramilitary culture had to

[318] Kenney, Padraic, *Dance in Chains: Political Imprisonment in the Modern World*, (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2017), p. 191.
[319] Enjoyment of these stories may lead to more involved engagement with republicanism and its cultural output, or merely create a superficial but nonetheless positive image of Adams for a reader who then moves on. Either effect is clearly beneficial in building the movement and wider support for it.

incorporate expression and activities that accounted for a full range of feelings, contexts and needs. As I have suggested, the deprivations of imprisonment were acute for paramilitary prisoners as well as their ordinary counterparts, and political music was not fully thematically developed enough to account for loneliness, boredom and other more banal but no less painful responses to incarceration. Mainstream music, as a complementary rather than threatening or destabilising practice, could assist in this regard. As will be seen, this cultural amalgamation continued through the prison protests and into the subsequent phase of imprisonment, suggesting it was a useful and necessary practice.

Similar to the alignments drawn with other movements through political music, reading and lectures, politically-inflected mainstream music could also be used to demonstrate the more outward-looking intentions of this new generation of republicanism. The time, resources and spatial nature of Long Kesh facilitated an attention to cultural production that would have been difficult to match, and likely considered a distraction, in the chaotic, violent reality of paramilitary activity on the outside. The kind of counter-cultural interests or self-perceptions that the listening habits of Sands et al reveal was also reflected back to them by certain mainstream artists, as will be seen in Chapter Five. Loyalist prisoners also drew political links and affiliations through more mainstream music, particularly in the 1980s and 1990s, although with a much more localised reach.

Paramilitary imprisonment during 1971 - 1976, particularly but not exclusively in the Long Kesh compounds, was therefore a significant period in the construction of paramilitary prison culture which would inform its expression for the following decades. Music shaped and was shaped by the prison-based cultural amalgamation and sharpening that took place in republicanism and loyalism. It was also integral to the embedding of that prison culture within the community, and the lines of communication and transmission in between. By the end of

Special Category Status in March 1976, music had been established within the prison as a means of bonding, emotional expression, political communication and generally getting by. On the outside, it provided these functions for families and communities upon whom paramilitary imprisonment placed a significant burden. Music facilitated practical aid within the community, with help from the prisoners who produced handicrafts and records, and from the community to the prisoners via instruments, records and equipment. This musical expression had become a fully integrated part of prison and communal life; it was therefore well-placed to play a key role in the following five years of paramilitary imprisonment, when the emotional, political and socio-cultural stakes were even higher.

Chapter Three: Music in the Prisons 2: Criminalisation and Protest, 1976 – 1981.

A policy of explicit criminalisation was introduced by the phasing out of Special Category Status from March 1976, partially in response to the unusual level of freedom and dominance prisoners had achieved in the preceding years in the Long Kesh compound, and the security concerns this generated. Paramilitary prisoners would now mostly be held in the more rigidly organised cellular H-Blocks and treated as ordinary criminals. This spatial and ideological difference had implications for prison-based cultural production, cutting prisoners off from one another, and undermining their highly prized and assertively-demonstrated moral and military legitimacy.

In the protests that followed, prison became a critical site of the conflict as a whole, and prisoners attempted to use their imprisonment against the state. The republican blanket protest, dirty protest and hunger strikes cannot be underestimated in terms of their impact upon the prisoners involved and the communities around them. Music was a key part of this struggle both within, through and outside prison walls, building on the functions and themes examined in the previous chapter in a more emotionally and politically-charged context. This period of republican-dominated protest reinforced loyalist insecurity, fear, comparative lack of ideological clarity and the division between this group and its republican counterpart. While loyalists partook in the protests against criminalisation to varying degrees, this was the era in which republicanism fully commandeered the issue of political status, even the prison itself, for its own cause, the consequences of which shaped paramilitary imprisonment and the wider political and cultural struggle in the following decades. In this chapter I will examine the role music played in the forging of this republican culture and loyalist reactions to it, as well as how the new penal context shaped musical expression and its significance for prisoners in relation to the issues of criminalisation, conformity and protest.

Criminalisation: The loss of Special Category Status and the resulting protests.

In order to examine how cultural production was affected by and used in response to the policy of criminalising prisoners, it is necessary to address how that policy and the resulting protests manifested. The end of Special Category Status followed the findings of the 1975 Gardiner Committee, convened to address civil liberties and counter-terrorism in Northern Ireland, that "the introduction of special category status for convicted prisoners was a serious mistake."[320] The report recognised the impact of the freedom that the Long Kesh compound gave to prisoners, particularly how they had been able to mix and utilise the space available. It recommended that a permanent prison be built, that detainees be held separately from convicted prisoners, and "the design of prison compounds should be modified to improve internal security, and their size should be considerably reduced."[321] Special Category Status and the nature of prison accommodation that went with it had been a pragmatic response to ceasefire-related negotiations with the PIRA as well as practical issues surrounding the sudden increase in the prison population and resulting need for accommodation; it was now understood as disruptive to prison security, discipline and staff authority. However, as noted by MP Stan Orme in December 1975, "it was much easier to start than to stop this."[322]

Nevertheless, it was stopped, or at least for newly convicted prisoners. The newly constructed cellular prison for those inmates was built on the Long Kesh site, renamed HMP Maze. The compounds and cages or huts within them remained for prisoners convicted before 1 March 1976, who retained Special Category Status. The Maze contained eight buildings known to prisoners as H-Blocks, due to their distinctive shape. Each block consisted of four wings with

[320] Report of a Committee to consider, in the context of civil liberties and human rights, measures to deal with terrorism in Northern Ireland, 1975. 34, 107.
[321] Ibid., p. 36, 115.
[322] HC Deb 13 February 1975 vol 886 cc585-8.

twenty-five cells each, an exercise yard, toilet facilities, hobbies and dining spaces, and a central adjoining corridor containing administrative offices, a medical centre, stores and classrooms.[323] These were new, purpose-built constructions, in contrast to the run-down huts of the Long Kesh compound, the poor conditions of which were felt by some in government to contribute, along with wider security measures such as internment, to former inmates' commitment to continue their struggle upon release and the alienation of their families and communities.[324]

The criminalisation of politically-motivated prisoners entailed that they were subject to the same regime as ordinary inmates. They were no longer entitled to refuse prison uniform or prison work, or to the extra visits and parcels their status had afforded them. Perhaps most key to social and cultural life was the fact that, although the wings were segregated by paramilitary faction as the cages had been, freedom of association was now curtailed by the standard prison schedule. The centrality of the goal of regaining Special Category Status, or similar recognition as prisoners-of-war, to republicans was expressed in a draft internal government memo on the likelihood of a hunger strike in 1979, which stated that "as republican spokesmen have admitted, if the issue of Special Category Status is lost, then so is the war."[325]

Non-conforming, musical resources and socialising.

Conforming to prison rules or instead joining the protest had a significant effect on the resources and activities available to prisoners. As one memo from December 1978 described:
"Conforming blocks enjoy: full range of privileges. Handicrafts, library, association, TV, radios, record players and cassette players, table games, education, films, sports hall, sports fields,

[323] English, p. 189.
[324] Mr. Stallard. HC Deb 17 April 1973 vol 855 cc275-392. 341.
[325] 'The Protest - Possible Hunger Strike.' (Draft 1), p. 1. NIO/12/160A.

football, exercise in yards evening (summer.) Non-conforming blocks lose: all privileges, but as conforming prisoners they would become eligible for consideration for privileges as listed above."[326] As a result, conforming prisoners in the H-Blocks could continue aspects of the cultural life established in the compounds, albeit in a more circumscribed manner: reading material, musical equipment and collective entertainment and social interaction was still possible.

In contrast, protesting prisoners had very little available, experiencing imprisonment on Goffman's model of "when existence is cut to the bone" far more than in the preceding phase.[327] The deprivations entailed by the refusal to conform, and the distinctive cultural production resulting from those conditions, became a symbol of republican strength, sacrifice and endurance that would become just as significant in terms of imagery as lyrical content extolling those virtues. The type of musical and cultural practices possible for prisoners during this period represented how they coped with or subverted the deprivations of imprisonment. They were also a medium through which those deprivations could be demonstrated, alongside the implied moral and political merit of having committed to endure them. Republicans were at the front line of the prison protests, meaning their musical expression was most acutely shaped by this new context.

It was not only republicans who were impacted by this change in policy, nor only republicans who responded to it. The so-called "blanket protest" began when "on 14 September 1976 Kieran Nugent [...] became the first prisoner to be convicted for a serious offence committed after 1 March 1976. He immediately refused to work or wear prison clothing and went on hunger strike from 15-20 September. (He also began refusing exercise.) As further offenders were convicted for offences committed after 1 March 1976, other prisoners from both protestant and catholic

[326] To Mr Silk, 20/12/78, 'Conclusions.' NIO/12/122A.
[327] Goffman, p. 268.

paramilitary groups joined the protest," the NIO reported.[328] Both republican and loyalist paramilitaries on the outside responded to the news of the impending change: "There were demonstrations by Protestant groups in support of Special Category status in February 1976 and the first PIRA violence over the issue occurred in April 1976 when a prison officer was murdered and the house of another bombed."[329]

Despite the shared goal of a return to Special Category Status, and the initial actions undertaken by loyalist prisoners and groups, the protests were overwhelmingly taken up by republicans. As Crawford writes "during 1978 a majority of loyalist political prisoners in the H-Blocks went on blanket protest, and maintained the protest for a number of weeks. However, the OC of one of the loyalist factions took his men 'off the blanket', and the other groups had little choice but to end their protest also."[330] The republican spearheading and domination of the protests against criminalisation made loyalist involvement problematic, lest they be seen as siding with the IRA, the primary enemy of their organisations and communities on the outside. The ideological confusion generated by this common ground with republicans was made more acute by loyalists' shared ideological and even geographical background with state forces and prison authorities. This lack of loyalist involvement arguably undermined the campaign for political status. A former prison officer at Long Kesh/ Maze interviewed by Crawford argues that:

> "They saw the British as their friends. They had no idea about how to respond to what was happening in 'their' prisons. If they had all gone on blanket protest, the place would have ground to a halt. [...] Even more importantly, all the prison officers lived in loyalist areas. If we had been really threatened [by loyalists], the POA [Prison Officers' Association] would have intervened and the protest would have been resolved."[331]

[328] 'History of the protest against the ending of special category status,' NIO/12/122A.
[329] Ibid.
[330] Crawford, p. 55.
[331] Ibid., p. 166.

However, while prison staff were on occasion victims of loyalist violence, a concerted campaign of this nature would have placed loyalist paramilitaries too close to republican territory, alienating wider supporters, particularly as the protest progressed and media scrutiny increased. Other factors, such as difficulties co-ordinating between loyalist groups and lack of coherent steering in comparison to the PIRA and INLA may also have limited loyalist potential to join the blanket protest long-term. Loyalist inability to commit wholeheartedly to the prison protests due to their association with republicanism became self-perpetuating, cementing the perception that political status was a primarily republican issue.

The protests meant there were three distinct groups of prisoners in the Maze: those who retained Special Category Status, having been sentenced before 1 March 1976; those who conformed to prison rules; and those who did not, the so-called "non-conforming" prisoners. The boundaries between the latter two groups were relatively fluid: as suggested, loyalist prisoners protested sporadically, and then returned to conforming to the prison regime. Republican prisoners did not all take part in the protests, nor did all republican participants commit to it unwaveringly. The decision to come off the protest was known by republicans as "squeaky-booting," referring to the sound of a new pair of prison-issue boots along the corridors.[332] This term suggests the importance of the soundscape of the prison, particularly in the cellular H-Blocks, where prisoners were mostly visually isolated from anything outwith the confines of their cells. As McAtackney states, this sound sent the message that a fellow prisoner had fallen by the wayside, and that the rest should not: "The knowledge that this noise would be apparent to the rest of the wing inadvertently ensured that many men who were faltering stayed on protests. To 'squeaky boot' was considered the ultimate betrayal of the cause and your fellow prisoners. That such

[332] Campbell, Brian, Laurence McKeown, Felim O'Hagan (Eds), *Nor Meekly Serve My Time: The H-Block Struggle 1976-81*, (Belfast: Beyond the Pale, 1994), p. x.

actions were apparent to the other prisoners whilst they were locked in their cells indicates how sensory perceptions of surroundings were heightened in this environment."[333]

The importance of the physical environment to the prison protests, and the use of music and sound in relation to them, was enhanced in "April 1977 (it had become apparent to the prison authorities that some prisoners had been subjected to threats and intimidation to force them to join the protest) and it was therefore decided to move all the protesting prisoners into a single block so as to remove other prisoners from their direct pressure."[334] While intimidation and threats were a security concern, the isolation of all protesting prisoners in one area only increased the pressure upon them to continue their campaign, as McAtackney highlights. 'Squeaky' boots would have been harder to identify if the block's corridors regularly rang with the sound of conforming prisoners in authorised garb. Just as housing Special Category prisoners and internees together with little imposed structure created potent cultural expression in the Long Kesh compound, well-defined cultural practices emerged from the intensely tightly-knit and spatially isolated nature of the protesting H-Blocks.

Isolation was a key element of the physical environment of the H-Blocks, exacerbated by the deprivations of the protests, in comparison to the compound layout. Prisoners had their own cells until July 1977, when "the number of protesters had risen to 143 and because of the shortage of space it now became necessary to confine some of the prisoners two to a cell."[335] Protesting prisoners refused prison work and other forms of association, and were not allowed to leave their cell without wearing uniform: they thus spent the vast majority of the day confined to

[333] McAtackney, p. 170.
[334] 'History of the protest against the ending of special category status,' NIO/12/122A.
[335] Ibid.

these cells, and the company of a cell mate and others within earshot on the wing.[336] Along with the inability to access reading material, musical equipment and other resources or activities, the protest also included smashing furniture in cells, entailing a particularly sparse, raw existence.

The dirty protests: Bonding and division.

The prisoners adapted to these physical conditions, and indeed actively worsened them, as seen in the development of the "dirty" or "no-wash" protests from March 1978. In an escalation of their refusal to conform, prisoners refrained from using showers or other facilities, and began to soil their cells with bodily waste and rotting food, daubing faeces onto the walls as well as pouring urine into corridors.[337] An environment of already extreme deprivation was converted into one of degradation, filth and unequivocally inhumane conditions. As with the blanket protests, this was not a purely republican endeavour. An NIO summary of 1979 from 3rd January 1980 reported that, as of 15th December 1979, there were 343 protesting IRA prisoners, 13 from the Irish Republican Socialist Party (IRSP) and 6 loyalists.[338] The report also noted that, on the 15th December 1979, there were 665 conforming prisoners at the Maze, including young prisoners, of whom republicans numbered 335. While these statistics suggest a more nuanced reality than the impression that the dirty protest was a uniquely, and comprehensively, republican prison experience that can sometimes be conveyed, they clearly demonstrate a far stronger republican involvement.

[336] Exceptions were made by some prisoners who would briefly wear prison clothing in order to take visits and attend religious services.
[337] 'Observations of the Government of the United Kingdom on the admissibility of application No 8317/78 lodged by Thomas McFeeley, Kieran Nugent, John Hunter and William Campbell.' NIO/12/123.
[338] 'The Dirty Protest at Maze Prison - Quarterly Statistical Summary, NIO (DA), 3.1.80.' NIO/12/125A.

The harsh conditions of the dirty protest, and the greater republican participation in it, was a turning point in republican paramilitary culture which persisted in its imagery and myth-making far beyond the end of the protests. Pushing the deprivations of the blanket protest to unimaginable conditions, prisoners who partook in this campaign were bound by a common emotional and physical experience that paved the way for the extreme sacrifice of the subsequent hunger strikes. Visits were taken by many prisoners, in which they were able to see wives and families, but these would have been heavily impacted by the physical state and appearance of the prisoner and likely dominated by the stress and developments of the protest.[339] Security was threatened by the increased tension between prisoners and staff, along with concerns over the possibility of an epidemic due to insanitary conditions. Autonomy and liberty were further sacrificed by the demands of the prison-based paramilitary organisation to join and maintain commitment to this campaign. Coping with, adapting to and resisting the demands of this period was, therefore, an even more acute matter of psychological and even physical endurance and survival than it had been during the preceding years.

This was not only an issue of personally withstanding the demands of the protests, but of winning the "war" for political status and, by extension, the war outside. Solidarity was integral to this process: between the protesting prisoners, and between that group and the paramilitary organisation and communal support outside. The status of republican prisoners as political prisoners was evidently central to the blanket and dirty protests, and in a sense was justified or proven by those events: it is highly unlikely that ordinary prisoners would or could collectively undertake the kind of actions that republican prisoners did during this period.

[339] Women also regularly smuggled items into the prison within their bodies, to be exchanged on visits, giving those encounters a strategic, and even more stressful, purpose than a solely personal function. (Fairweather et al, pp. 56 - 57; 61 - 63).

The protests were thus integral to the demonstration of the "political" element of paramilitary prisoner identity. They also divided this identity along paramilitary and communal lines. The extreme, even unthinkable nature of the dirty protest and hunger strikes, combined with the publicity it attracted, created and reinforced further divisions between loyalist and republican prisoners which only hardened the wider political and cultural struggle. Billy Wright, who was imprisoned in the late 1970s and would go on to lead the UVF and later LVF, recalls the impact of the blanket protests on his thinking:

> "'I remember standing at the gates of an H Block. Where the blanket protest was taking place… Standing beside me was a blanket protestor. He hadn't washed in a year. He was jaundiced. The stench of excrement filled the air. But there was an atmosphere of pure history,' Wright recalled a decade later. 'I stood in awe and said to myself what I'm seeing is pure history… Here was a movement that could inflict violence on itself. What would it not inflict on human beings? It was a danger to my people.'"[340]

The compound accommodation had facilitated a degree of inter-communal exposure, and even collaboration and negotiation.[341] The physical layout of the H-Blocks and the disgust and fear generated by the actions of republican protesters made this much less plausible. Staff were also exposed to these conditions, and the tightly-wound prisoners within them, alongside a parallel campaign of violence on the outside that contributed to their own anger and insecurity. These features of simultaneously enhanced solidarity and division, stress and tension came to bear upon the use of music during this period, and beyond.

[340] Edwards, p. 158.
[341] Crawford, pp. 36-39.

‘Concerts’ and collective singing during the blanket protest: Consolidating the group and its leaders.

The strengthening of solidarity was integral to the maintenance of morale and perpetuation of the protests. There was a strong collective element to the prisoners’ singing and musical expression. Concerts and sing-songs are described at various stages of the prison protests, marking birthdays, calendar events, the arrival of new inmates to the H-Blocks and the beginning of the hunger strikers’ fasts. Both political and popular music were used, seemingly easily combined. Whalen, drawing on Lloyd, notes the importance of the oral tradition during the protesting period as “forbidden access to all writing material, the prisoners quickly initiated the “reinvention or raising of the oral community against the deprivations of the prison regime and the violent coercion of speech under investigation”: singing certainly proved to be a critical and effective manifestation of this resistance to prison discipline.”[342] Singing and oral story-telling clearly took a more central role, although as Whalen discusses, republicans also wrote lyrics with whatever materials they could make-do with. These recurring sing-songs and instalments of stories were a means of breaking up the day during the protests, when other forms of stimulation were virtually non-existent. Lack of resources meant protesting prisoners were unable to privately listen to, read or watch anything that was not self-generated, and were thus entirely dependent on their own imagination and creative skill or those of other prisoners. These conditions enforced a collective approach to entertainment far more than standard imprisonment.

Reflecting its integral role in their identity construction, political music was a regular theme of republican H-Block concerts and sing-songs. Beresford describes the singing that greeted the arrival of Francis Hughes to H-Block 5 in early 1980: “they had a sing-song that night and he

[342] Whalen, 2014, p. 137, quote from Lloyd, p. 196.

showed that he had a good voice, with renderings of 'Kevin Barry' – celebrating another legendary IRA figure, from the War of Independence – and 'Tom Williams,' whose hanged body still lay in the yard of the Crumlin Road remand prison Hughes had just left."[343] These songs draw a link between Hughes, who became the second republican hunger striker to die on 12 May 1981, his comrades in the H-Blocks and the hero-martyrs that went before them. Irish Volunteer Kevin Barry was executed aged eighteen by British forces in November 1920, following his participation in the killing of three soldiers, the first such execution since the Rising.[344] Along with his age, his hanging caught public attention as a result of its coincidence with the death by hunger strike of Terence MacSwiney in Brixton Prison a week before.

The ballad *Kevin Barry* places a significant emphasis on imprisonment, including the opening line "In Mountjoy jail one Monday morning…" and a reference to a "dreary prison cell."[345] Endurance is also a key theme: "As he walked to death that morning/ He proudly held his head on high," the audience is told.[346] While its overarching message is one of Irish rebellion and struggle against Britain, it is clear from the prison theme why this song may have seemed especially fitting to Hughes, and to the reader of Beresford's text. Martyrdom is also a strong theme in *Kevin Barry*: the last verse includes the lyrics "Another martyr for old Ireland/ Another murder for the crown" and the final lines "Lads like Barry will free Ireland/ For her sake they'll live and die," all of which could have been composed in relation to Hughes' hunger-strike.[347]

[343] Beresford, p. 161.
[344] Kee highlights Barry's death and public response to it as evidence that at this point in the violence, "as far as the propaganda war was concerned the government had long been left far behind by Sinn Fein," observing: "An affidavit of his to the effect that he had been beaten by British officers during the course of interrogation made a considerable impact on public opinion. By contrast the fact that the soldier he had shot was as young as himself made virtually none." (Kee, p. 695; 696.)
[345] O Lochlainn, Colm, *Irish Street Ballads*, (London: Pan Books, 1978), p. 98.
[346] Ibid., p. 98.
[347] Ibid., p. 99.

That said, *Kevin Barry* is a standard in the republican ballad repertoire, and has been covered by various artists including The Clancy Brothers, rebel stalwarts The Wolfe Tones, and Canadian singer-songwriter Leonard Cohen. Barry's death is also referenced in other rebel songs, including The Wolfe Tones' *Rifles of the IRA.* Clearly this song resonates with many, and thus while it is tempting to suggest Hughes somehow associated his own impending martyrdom with that of Barry, it is likely the song was chosen for its standing and popularity. The combination of this song with *Tom Williams,* another republican hanged, as Beresford points out, in Belfast prison, does imply these themes of imprisonment, sacrifice and martyrdom weighed upon Hughes, issues that were surely at the forefront of many prisoners' minds during this period.[348]

Endurance, vulnerability and masculinity.

These songs reflect and inculcate the importance of sacrifice and endurance to republicanism. This is not dogma handed down to a passive audience by the singer, but an exchange of affirmation, persuasion and support, in which the singer strengthens the audience's commitment and vice versa. Solidarity and endurance thus go hand in hand, transmitted and sustained through cultural activity. McKeown, Rolston and O'Hearn have examined how the prison protests, and the deprivations they entailed, enhanced both internal group bonds and the antagonism expressed collectively from republican prisoners towards prison staff. Stoicism, such as that attributed to Barry, is tied into wider values of masculinity espoused by republicanism and was a means of bonding between male prisoners without appearing weak, Rolston and McKeown argue. They suggest masculinity in the H-Blocks during this period was based on the maxim attributed to MacSwiney that "it is not those who can inflict the most, but those that can suffer the most who will conquer," and as such: "The sign of "being a man" for

[348] Like those of *Kevin Barry*, the lyrics to *Tom Williams* highlights the sacrifice of prisoners, and specifically those that would die in prison, as a stepping-stone to Irish liberation.

the prisoner in this situation was not what it might have been, for example, in a pub brawl or urban gang. The point was not to inflict injury but to take it in order to reveal the futility of official violence and the determination of the prisoners to achieve their ultimate goal. The resistant prisoner would not be broken."[349]

I would go further and argue that the dirty protest was a demonstration of republicans' ability to "take" injury from the enemy as well as inflict it upon themselves, and emerge stronger and more determined. This was the impression that so alarmed Billy Wright, and was not merely posturing but integral to republicans' self-conception during this period. Lyrics of songs used during the protest reinforced these values. Kevin Barry and Tom Williams were calm, proud and unbroken even in death, the songs declare. These songs establish solidarity with those figures and the other manifestations of republican sacrifice they invoke, as well as between republican H-Block prisoners.

Identified as a key bonding factor during the republican protests by Rolston and McKeown, representations of masculinity are a significant theme in republican music, as well as in the loyalist canon. This is perhaps inevitable: most paramilitary leaders, combatants and prisoners have been male. The spaces in which much of this cultural production and reproduction took place, that is prison, pubs, social clubs and sporting occasions, were, and largely remain, male-dominated. However, the way in which men are depicted in these songs is also shaped by wider ideological conceptions. Broadly speaking, loyalist imagery in or accompanying music is straightforwardly aggressive and powerful: loyalist men are triumphant in battle or other physical or ideological altercations, either as the perpetrator or the victorious defender, and album covers show active behaviour such as the pointing of guns.[350]

[349] Rolston and McKeown, p. 271.
[350] For example, the cover of the album *Songs of the UVF*, with vocals by the Platoon.

The wider tenets of republican ideology make its representation of masculinity more complex. While there are actively aggressive examples, such as *Come Out You Black and Tans*, the experience of the male protagonists of many republican songs also involves suffering, sacrifice, difficulty and often defeat. In order to inspire and mobilise, rather than demoralise, these demands and deprivations must be converted into strengths, similar to the "triumph of failure" discussed earlier. As Boyle writes of the hero-martyr genre, these songs inculcate "what it truly means to be a *man* of outstanding character," one who is not a victim of circumstance but actively chooses to take up his nation's cause at significant personal cost, and embodies the extraordinary qualities required to do so.[351] The songs sung by Hughes are examples of this sub-set of republican music, as are many of the pieces that were written about hunger strikers such as Hughes and the protesting prisoners in general.

Rolston and McKeown argue that this conversion of difficulty into strength was key to the interlinked phenomena of solidarity, resistance and emotional management during the prison protests. To this I would add that the use of song in the various ways described in this chapter was a significant means of facilitating this process, through the lyrical themes described above and the act of singing itself. A paramilitary prisoner may have been committed to the protest, but still have moments of doubt or difficulty in the face of these conditions. "Emotions were a potential gateway to vulnerability, not simply personal and social in terms of faltering solidarity but also organizational, threatening to the strategy of resistance within the prison," write Rolston and McKeown, with the caveat that: "That said, prison was not solely an emotional desert. Meaningful interpersonal interaction did occur."[352] On Reddy's model of emotional regimes and refuges, songs in the hero-martyr genre which addressed the issue of prison-related sacrifice

[351] Boyle, p. 190.
[352] Rolston and McKeown, p. 278.

provided a sanctioned outlet through which prisoners could express fear, pain, and other negative or potentially destabilising emotions. These songs allowed engagement with this vulnerability without threatening the resistance and solidarity required by the protests, and actively bolstered those phenomena through making endurance a source of strength, even a weapon.

Performance and pressure.

The act of singing, as well as the songs' lyrical content, was a potential site of vulnerability or weakness, particularly when making one's debut on a wing. Despite their ability to foster strength and solidarity, these performances could also be fraught with nerves or stage-fright for some prisoners. Not all inmates had the requisite skills, which could cause friction. Republican prisoner Joe McQuillan recalls that, while some were excellent singers, "others were brutal, and that's putting it mildly, but at least they had the courage to sing which is more than I had," providing a more nuanced view of the rousing republican sing-song.[353] Former prisoner Tom Holland reports that "the general idea of having singsongs was sound, but when you take into consideration that each prisoner had only a limited knowledge of songs, and even at this a lot of the lads wouldn't hesitate to chance their arm with the words, the enthusiasm soon wore off. A more specific problem was the singers (a term used very broadly) who loved singing but who, unfortunately for us, couldn't sing a note - Martin Hurson was such a person."[354]

Hurson, who became the sixth republican hunger striker to die in 1981, is also described as "one woeful singer" by O'Rawe, who suggests he was overly reliant on the rebel song *Sean South*

[353] Campbell et al, p. 73.
[354] McKeown, p. 73.

from Garryowen, which Holland also mentions as one of Hurson's staples.[355] An anonymous blanket man writing from H3 echoes the problems of trying to maintain a varied repertoire, exclaiming "have you ever tried to count how many songs you know or knew? Impossible!!", along with the more prosaic downside of rousing, collective singing: "J.H. Christ I've no chance of getting asleep."[356] Beresford states that INLA member Patsy O'Hara, the fourth of the 1981 republican hunger strikers to die, "was renowned for a love of singing, but had a hideous ear for tone and his contributions to concerts tended to be met with roars of abuse."[357]

Clearly, even political musical expression was not exempt from tension, even if it could be conducive to solidarity and improved morale. Any group forced to spend long periods of time together in a situation that is at once dull and stressful will likely rub each other up the wrong way, irrespective of a common cause. The limited, repetitive and familiar canon of political songs, despite their emotional impact or psychological benefit, also surely contributed to this potential boredom.

Popular music during the protests.

Popular and mainstream music was also a feature of collective singing, and a means of demonstrating talent and prowess. Republican prisoner Joe McQuillan observes that "some of the men had excellent voices and did credit to Simon and Garfunkel, the Eagles or Harry Nilsson."[358] It also required some making-do and resourcefulness: when lyrics could not be fully remembered, "different blokes would know bits and pieces and put them together like jigsaw puzzles," while "others just stuck in what they thought sounded good. The words of the songs

[355] O'Rawe, Richard, *Blanketmen*, (Dublin: New Island, 2005), p. 35; McKeown, p. 74.
[356] Letter from H-3, p. 5.
[357] Beresford, p. 209.
[358] Campbell et al, p. 73.

would then be shouted out to anyone who asked for them."[359] This suggests practical restrictions shaped which popular songs could be sung collectively, likely favouring the most well-known options or those with simplistic and catchy lyrics. Singing benefited the singer through providing an expressive, emotional outlet, but they still had a duty to entertain and play to the floor (or cell door), whether through a demonstration of legitimate skill or the creative re-working of songs only partially recalled.

Certain songs, and performers, recur in republican sources. O'Rawe describes McFarlane as a regular performer during their time in the H-Blocks in the late 1970s, stating that "Bik was a great singer, and on many occasions he treated us to his vast repertoire of songs, which ranged from Joni Mitchell's 'Big Yellow Taxi' and Bad Company's 'Superstar' to Procol Harum's 'A Whiter Shade of Pale'," and at another stage performed *Alright Now* by Free with Sands.[360] As noted in the previous chapter, while they are by no means niche, many of the artists referenced in these sources have a left-of-centre political or intellectual association, suggesting republican prisoners' musical tastes mirrored the counter-cultural credentials that the wider movement was attempting to build.

The importance of popular music to republican concerts and sing-songs is suggested by O'Hearn's claim that during Sands' time on the protest he would write to contacts in other blocks requesting they send him song lyrics, by artists including Michael Jackson and Buffy Sainte-Marie.[361] He would then commit these to memory and sing them through his cell to the other prisoners on his wing. A necessarily pared-down version of the more extravagant concerts before and after the protests, these singing performances would be accompanied by story-telling

[359] Ibid., p. 73.
[360] O'Rawe, p. 47; p. 245.
[361] O'Hearn, 2006, p. 222.

sessions, both improvised by the prisoners and following stories and novels they knew from memory.[362]

Sing-songs provided a formula and forum for interaction with other prisoners and a way of getting to know one another and express emotions without having to instigate personal or profound conversation. This was even more valuable in the H-Blocks, as prisoners were mostly confined to their cells, meaning only cellmates were visible and other prisoners could only be communicated with through walls, doors and pipes. Impromptu sing-songs to herald the arrival of a new prisoner established the new member as part of the group, and gave them a sense of how things are done. The new resident would also likely be able to gauge a sense of hierarchy from this ensemble performance, including where he might fit into his new community. In this regard, both organised and impromptu performances facilitated individual self-expression and the construction and ordering of the collective.

As with its political counterpart, the way prisoners engaged with popular music reflected their protesting or conforming status. Cobbling together half-remembered lyrics between prisoners on the wing or sending out for help with broadening the repertoire was necessitated by their extreme lack of resources. These conditions affected what could be achieved. Even performing such songs with no musical accompaniment would have rendered them extremely different from how they were originally intended to sound. This contrast is much clearer in the case of popular music than with political or traditional songs, which are often moulded through use, and even designed for communal, spontaneous singing. Most republican music centres on lyrics and basic melody rather than any extravagant or complex musical elements. In contrast, *Alright Now* is a bombastic anthem that relies heavily on its distinctive guitar riff, and much of Michael

[362] Ibid., p. 191; p. 220.

Jackson's 1970s back catalogue is highly, even experimentally, produced. These lyrics sung by an individual or group of prisoners separated by walls and doors may have created an effect so different from the original recording as to limit the potential for escapism or temporarily forgetting one's harsh surroundings.

Conversely, prisoners who left or never joined the protest could enjoy mainstream music as the recording artist intended, in a more leisurely and passive fashion. In a cigarette paper letter "presumed to be from Martin Meehan" found after a visit on 29th October 1980 and thought to be intended for smuggling to another prisoner, Meehan writes that "We are allowed L.P.s in, there are a few good ones in the Wing. I had Supertramp in the cell tonight, listening to it. I'm getting Pink Floyd in, wish you were here, I have a visit tomorrow and there should be a guitar left in for me."[363] Both bands referred to by Meehan are English, progressive rock groups who achieved high levels of fame in the 1970s, particularly during the middle and latter half of the decade. Meehan, a prominent PIRA member from the Ardoyne area of Belfast, was imprisoned periodically from 1972 until the end of internment, again from 1980 until 1985, and then from 1988 until 1994.[364] The Pink Floyd album he mentions, *Wish You Were Here,* was released in September 1975, coinciding roughly with his re-adaptation to freedom.

Access to these records and a guitar was possible as, following his hunger strike, Meehan was no longer a protesting prisoner. This is addressed in the same letter with the statement that: "Something that I would like to say before I go on to anything else is about me leaving the Protest. Tony, I'm not going to make any apologies for coming off it, I made the decision and I'll stand by that decision no matter. I don't give two fucks what anyone thinks or says."[365] This

[363] NIO/12/160A.
[364] 'Martin Meehan: IRA commander who went on to support the peace process,' *The Guardian*, 5 November 2007, p. 34, cols. a-e.
[365] NIO/12/160A.

defiance may have stemmed from an unease, either felt by Meehan or expected from other republicans, concerning the increased comfort symbolised by suddenly being able to enjoy recreational activities and resources which many of his fellow prisoners could not.

Bobby Sands: Music and myth-making I.

When a prisoner got musical expression "right" it could be extremely beneficial to that individual's standing, in the moment and in terms of their place in republican mythology. Bobby Sands appears to have generated more song lyrics, poetry and prose than any other prisoner, republican or loyalist, of the recent conflict. Sands' comparatively prolific output and the attendant skill it demonstrates is extremely prominent in analysis of republican prison music, as well as in biographical work on Sands. His various musical talents and interests have been outlined in notable detail by Beresford and O'Hearn, and the themes of his song-writing and its wider significance for the republican movement has been examined at length by Whalen.

This is a clear example of the hero-martyr constructed through reference to creative skill and tenacity. Along with endurance, Boyle also highlights that "the theme of *intellectual, artistic* and moral qualities of Irish martyrs is present in a number of songs, which try to present heroes as having more than simply physical courage. For instance, Padraig Pearse is portrayed as a 'Gaelic Scholar and a visionary', James Connolly as a 'lover of the poor', and in The People's Own MP, Bobby Sands as a 'poet and composer.'[366] Songs written on the outside about Sands and his fellow hunger strikers were heavily inspired by the prison conditions and the fact that Sands in particular was able to create music and lyrics within them. It appears that Sands' musical interests and talents were known to prisoners even before his iconic status in the republican

[366] Boyle, p. 190.

pantheon was reached. Sands was sentenced to fourteen years in September 1977 for firearms offences, alongside fellow future hunger striker Joe McDonnell, having already been held in the Long Kesh compound.[367] While there are references to his musical exploits during the compound period, his cultural impact on prison life seems to have been greatest during the protests. The focus on Sands' musical production in writings on his life and republican prison music in general is an example of an elevation, even fetishisation of the *process* of cultural production, as well as the cultural artefacts themselves, that takes place with regards to the republican prison protests. The image of the emaciated, degraded but dogged blanket man singing at his cell door, either to the rapt attention of his comrades or rousing them collectively, became symbolic of endurance, solidarity and republican goals alongside the lyrics through which those messages were conveyed.

Sands' most well-known pieces are *I Wish I Was Back Home in Derry* and *McIlhatton*, both of which are referred to as appearing in his sing-song and concert repertoire.[368] *McIlhatton* describes a brewer of poteen, the local moonshine that was also made in Long Kesh/ Maze, and has an anti-authority tinge through the eponymous McIlhatton's hiding from the law. *Back Home in Derry* is closer to the standard republican canon, focusing on a group of prisoners exiled to Australia, subject matter addressed in other songs such as *The Fields of Athenry* and *The Black Velvet Band*. These themes and the song's refrain with which it shares its title would surely have resonated significantly with Sands' republican prison audience, particularly those from the city or county for whom those words were precisely true (although Sands hailed from just north of Belfast).

[367] 'Six get 14 years each on arms charges', *The Irish News*, 8 September 1977, p. 2 col. e.
[368] McKeown, pp. 264-5; O'Rawe, p. 124; Beresford, pp. 89-90.

As with our discussion of Francis Hughes, Kevin Barry and Tom Williams, the self-identification between the author and his prisoner protagonist can be overstated from the position of knowing Sands' fate. Whalen cautions that "given the place that he himself would hold in the Republican Roll of Honor after dying on hunger strike, it's hard not to freight "Back Home in Derry" with an anachronistic sense of foreboding. However, to do so is on a certain level to miss the point. The song consciously places its narrator in a continuum of rebel predecessors: the persona is not Sands, but whoever might be singing, a strategic rhetorical move."[369] The anonymous, first-person narrator style is used in both loyalist and republican pieces and a key element of its emotional effect is that the singer can become the narrator-persona, as Whalen suggests, thus joining the large "continuum of rebel predecessors" without having to choose one specifically. However, I would argue that this "anachronistic foreboding" has contributed to the song's persistence and popularity following Sands' death far more than the collective or continuous identity element made possible by the narrative style. For most people who became aware of it following May 1981, it is far more a song about him than about exile to Australia. This was, of course, not relevant to Sands' prison contemporaries, except once the hunger strike had begun.

Another of Sands's songs which reflected the pains of imprisonment endured during this period, albeit the more personal rather than political, was *Sad Song for Susan.* This piece is seemingly directed to a former girlfriend, with whom the narrator has lost touch or who may be deceased, and is pervaded by loneliness and painful nostalgia. O'Hearn suggests that this was not a song Sands performed regularly, but rather "just the odd time when the mood was quiet and slow," and states that "close friends felt that it was inspired by the breakup with [Sands' wife] Geraldine."[370] Beresford contends that Sands wrote the song down on cigarette paper as a gift

[369] Whalen, 2007, p. 134.
[370] O'Hearn, 2006, p. 197; p. 154.

for Richard O'Rawe, who took over as PIRA public relations officer when Sands began his fast, with Sands adding that "I wrote it one rainy afternoon on remand in H1 when I had the fine company of a guitar to pick out the tune."[371] O'Rawe states that he "had been pressing Bobby for some time" to do so.[372]

Whether the song was in fact about Geraldine, with whom Sands reportedly had a turbulent relationship, another woman named Susan, or the general theme of missing loved ones, this was clearly a significant issue for prisoners. They may have accepted this potential sacrifice earlier, when joining the paramilitary, but would surely still have experienced bouts of deep loneliness, and perhaps jealousy and resentment. *Sad Song for Susan* suggests this affected Sands; it can reasonably be assumed that many of his comrades experienced similar emotions. These were primarily heterosexual young men who would have left girlfriends and wives on the outside, and even if they had been single, they had forfeited the opportunity to change this upon entering prison. Sands was twenty-three when imprisoned for the second and final time. While this deprivation may have been eased by the cause to which the prisoner was committed, it could also have been compounded by the uncertainty of when loved ones would be seen again for those detained indefinitely or missing visits due to their protests. Thus, pieces such as *Sad Song for Susan* contributed to prisoners' ability to endure and demonstrate solidarity with one another. As Rolston and McKeown note, displays of vulnerability were not unheard of but also did not necessarily come easily. Musical talent and interest, a sanctioned and accepted practice of the hero-martyr, could alleviate concerns of appearing weak.

As Sands writing the song down for O'Rawe suggests, despite material restrictions protesting prisoners made-do with cigarette paper, toilet paper and other concealed and makeshift writing

[371] Beresford, p. 84.
[372] O'Rawe, p. 124.

tools. Notes or "comms" were smuggled in, out and around the prison to organise the protests and pass related messages, often transported inside the bodies of prisoners and visitors. Sands' memoir was "written on toilet paper with a biro refill and hidden inside Bobby Sands' own body."[373] Lyrics and verse left the prison in a similar manner or conveyed by other prisoners upon their release. This process, particularly important for communicating the tune of compositions, meant that the original likely underwent various transmutations in its telling and retelling. It was also dependent on the messenger's own musical ability. Christy Moore, who later recorded and regularly performs *Back Home in Derry* and *McIlhatton*, describes how he heard former prisoner Colm Scullion playing *McIlhatton*, noting that "the music was by Brendan McFarlane and although Scull was a good man to carry the lyrics God had not blessed him with a great capacity to carry a tune."[374] Whalen expands on the difficulties faced by Moore and fellow musician Donal Lunny in attempting to construct a melody from "Scullion's well-meaning warblings," and places them in the long-standing tradition in Irish folk music, if not most folk music, of oral transmission and the inevitable changes it entails.[375] Contributing to the impression that *Sad Song for Susan* was most noteworthy for its emotional content rather than political significance, Moore has stated that it proved too difficult to record: "I learned it and I tried to sing it but I couldn't fuckin' sing it because it was so… emotional… Oh, there's lots of sad songs, you can get through them but this one was too much for me to sing."[376]

The emotional effects that resulted from singing, performing, writing and sharing lyrics cannot be separated from the wider goals of the prisoners and their movement. Musical activity that enhanced solidarity and the ability to endure was not merely a question of nebulous political "resistance", "getting by" or coping, but a real tactical benefit to paramilitary strength in the

[373] Sands, Bobby, *One Day in My Life*, (Dublin: Pluto Press, 1983), back cover.
[374] Moore, Christy, *One Voice*, (London: Hodder and Stoughton, 2003), p. 88.
[375] Whalen, 2014, p. 140.
[376] O'Hearn, 2006, p. 155.

prison, a front in the wider struggle. Sands may have been a talented musician, lyricist and writer whose image persists amongst supporters as a martyr upon whom violence and tragedy was inflicted, but in the late 1970s he was first and foremost an imprisoned combatant and a prominent member of his paramilitary group within the prison.[377] These factors were complementary rather than contradictory. Similar to claims made by Rolston and McKeown, O'Hearn argues that republican prisoners achieved greater solidarity and strength through the endurance of violence and degrading conditions, solidarity that was displayed in "prisoner activities in appropriated spaces that reinforced the culture of resistance: promoting the Irish language, cultural production, and the production of propaganda."[378] "Charismatic leaders" that developed in the republican prison context were able to tread this fine line between displaying excessive, destabilising vulnerability and the need for emotional expression via cultural production: "Sands contributed to the atmosphere of trust by laying himself bare to the others" through singing and story-telling, but also through his political nous and strategising.[379]

Emotional expression through stories and songs was at its least threatening the more closely it was linked to political resistance. It is possible that Sands earned the right to express vulnerability through his more standard demonstrations of paramilitary legitimacy and strength: a less respected prisoner may have been viewed with more suspicion. O'Hearn suggests that Sands' attitude towards cultural activity in the prison was as an intentional political act within a wider propaganda strategy:

> "This was an example of leading by doing. Once he shared a poem or a song, Sands then smuggled it out to the movement for publication. In one sense, his poems and songs were a collective effort that emerged from talking with the other prisoners about their experiences and sharing his own experiences with them. Because of this, several

[377] Sands served as Public Relations Officer under Brendan Hughes as Officer Commanding, before taking over as OC when Hughes began his hunger strike (O'Hearn, 2006, pp. 182; 276).
[378] O'Hearn, 2009, p. 491.
[379] Ibid., p. 519.

> prisoners told me that his writings were the "bible of the blanket protest." He encouraged other prisoners to sing, recite, draw, or write. He smuggled out and published his first article on the blanket protest within a month of arriving in the H-blocks, and it was not long before dozens of prisoners were smuggling literally hundreds of stories, poems, and drawings out of the protesting blocks every week."[380]

This suggests a greater self-awareness than is sometimes presented in accounts of republican cultural production. Sands was a canny operator who understood the importance of driving the wider communal struggle around prisoners through whatever means could be utilised on the outside world. A comm from "Marcella," Sands' pseudonym, in H6 to the outside republican movement in August 1980 encouraged a mass mobilisation campaign including posters, other literature and material, graffiti, canvassing, parades, selling papers, stunts at sporting events and seemingly any action that could help with the task of "emotionally breaking people down into giving a commitment."[381] Notably, Sands addresses more overtly political action than the use of cultural practices, suggesting these were clearly secondary to more direct action. Nevertheless, the ability of certain songs to "emotionally break people down" and enhance commitment to the prisoners' cause places them into this category.

While the figure of Sands can be overly dominant in the study of republican prison music, this status itself provides insight into the functions of music in myth-making around prisoners. The ability to generate culture was intertwined with the promotion of endurance and sense of solidarity that bound prisoners and helped them continue their protest. This message made its way outside, not least through smuggled lyrics which could signal the prisoners' talent, strength and endurance through the very existence of compositions created in such circumstances. Artistic or creative skill contributed to political standing, through constructing symbolic icons or heroes, and regarding real strategy and tactics. "Storytelling was a key leadership skill," as

[380] Ibid., pp. 515-516; p. 514.
[381] Clarke, pp. 243 - 245.

O'Hearn states in relation to Sands.[382] This skill and creativity can also be presented in a way that departs from organisational abilities and functions as evidence of Sands' and his wider movement's moral qualities, when it may have been merely one political tool among many. The mythology built around Sands in the years following his death, in part through reference to his singing, storytelling and lyrical talents in texts such as those referenced here, and songs examined in Chapter Five, meant that figure could elicit a similar bonding and mobilising effect long after his death.

Consolidation through antagonism.

The role of musical, artistic and creative talent to the prison protests, leadership within them and the wider political movement can be overstated. As the missive from Marcella demonstrates, republicanism was a political struggle to which the cultural manifestation was secondary. While there were various instances of music and song restricted by, and used as a weapon against, authority on the outside world, clearly this was not the main way in which republicans or loyalists fought their war. Inside the prison, they remained paramilitary combatants, imprisoned for paramilitary offences. Their prison experience was filtered through that lens, particularly in a context in which comfort, security and in some cases prisoners' own lives were cast aside in the use of imprisonment as a site of the conflict. Music in this sense was an emotional, psychological and political primer; a substance and process that consolidated personal identity and collective bonds, and facilitated the mental and socio-cultural strength required for more tangible action. Nevertheless, within the prison, and particularly in the sparse conditions of the protest, resistance was cut to the bone: flyering, parading or a poster campaign were not feasible

[382] O'Hearn, 2009, p. 520.

and the only potential audience was either already on the protest or a direct opponent of it. As a result, music, sound and noise could become political action in their own right.[383]

As O'Hearn states, "the relationship between collective identity and action is reciprocal."[384] The construction of the emotional community through assertions of its existence reinforces that existence. These statements are often directed inward, but can also be used to antagonise, threaten or intimidate an enemy or "other," which feeds back into the original group and strengthens its bonds, security and confidence. Music, or any rhythmic sound or noise can have powerful physiological and psychological effects on both the listener and noise-maker, including inciting and releasing anxiety, anger, fear and confidence. This impact can be achieved through only sound and noise, and may be more threatening and disorientating at this level. It can also be compounded through lyrics that reinforce division and hostility. Making sound or singing in this way strengthens the immediate group engaged in the action, and establishes and reflects "deep, horizontal comradeship."[385] The main enemy for republican political prisoners during the protests, at least to whom they had access, was prison staff and orderlies. There were also instances of the expression of frustration between republican prisoners, and directed at prisoners from those outside.

Sands describes a confrontation that utilised song in his memoir, following an altercation between orderlies and republican prisoners: "A Nation Once Again resounded and echoed from behind every door and everyone joined in to break that ungodly silence, lifting our spirits and bolstering our shaken morale… The orderlies attempted a rendering of The Sash, but were

[383] As Hennessey notes regarding smuggling, "in the circumstances in which the protestors had placed themselves, great importance was attached to every point scored against the prison system" (p. 63). Any song used to taunt a staff member or noise that managed to dominate the area in their vicinity was likely judged the same way by prisoners.
[384] O'Hearn, 2009, p. 493.
[385] Anderson, p. 7.

drowned out with an explosion of noise as the now empty pos rattled and battered the scarred doors in defiance and anger."[386] As with all memoirs, particularly those produced at the height of the conflict by key figures in it, the accuracy of this anecdote has to be approached with caution. Nevertheless, the image that music was a mutual battleground between prisoners and staff, in which set pieces such as *The Sash* and *A Nation Once Again* acted as proxies for the wider communities, movements and goals, is extremely powerful for the likely sympathetic reader, as is the ultimate symbolic victory of the republican prisoners and, by extension, "the nation."

This story represents political music's ability to constitute the emotional community from which it derives as well as shaping the other side, locking both into a mutually dependent antagonistic cycle. The anger and hostility expressed in the above altercation are inextricably linked to morale and emotional release, as Sands suggests. This was aided by the existence of a political canon on both sides which facilitated communal singing of emotional significance to both the singers and the target. Other republican prisoners report similar incidents and effects: Joe McQuillan states that, following searches, "oddly enough, morale heightened. As the last cell door closed, everyone in the wing banged on their doors: no orders, no directives, pure spontaneity; then someone would sing and most of the wing would join in. Bawling out the likes of 'Provos March On', finishing with wild cheers and yells, getting rid of the built-up tension and aggression."[387] This reference to *Provos March On* shows that republicans also engaged with more modern rebel songs, drawing strength from their contemporary movement as well as historical links. The song also appears as a morale booster and response to staff brutality in a letter purportedly written by a blanket man for publication in a magazine, seemingly *Time*

[386] Sands, p. 60.
[387] Campbell et al, p. 52.

Out.[388] The anonymous prisoner highlights that *Provos March On* is one well-known song that borrows the tune of another, adding "...why not? Don't the song-writers capitalise on the public with the Coca-cola plastic type music?? Why shouldn't we do a bit of capitalising on them?!"[389] The use of the term "capitalising" and the idea that republican lyricists follow a similar process to commercial ones, presumably motivated by concerns such as ease and popularity, contrasts with the suggestion that newer republican compositions hark back to older ones due to reverence and a desire for historical legitimacy.

Like McQuillan and the anonymous blanket man, Brendan 'Bik' McFarlane describes how, after forced washes "there was something akin to a sense of achievement in the air as men chanted victory slogans and sang rousing Republican songs."[390] These references to achievement, morale and cheers following difficult, even violent interactions are examples of the republican triumph of failure in the prison context. The process of communal singing, even making sound, can relieve tension and improve emotional well-being, and combined with the lyrical effects of republican slogans and songs there is a sense that the greater the suffering now, the greater the victory that those songs proclaim will eventually be. They also demonstrate the function of antagonistic music in consolidating the group using it. "In hate music or war music the musicians play primarily to their mates, their friends, their allies. The purpose is to build solidarity," which is "more important than the message communicated to the targets," Kent argues."[391] This can be seen in many of the examples addressed in this thesis.

[388] Letter from H-3, p. 1.
[389] Ibid., p. 8. This discussion on *Provos March On* also underlines the boredom of H-Block life during the blanket protest with the comment that, as the prisoner cannot recall the air used by the song, "that's good I can spend an hour or 2 trying to remember it."
[390] Campbell et al, p. 68.
[391] Kent, p. 108; 109.

The sash my orderly wore.

Sands mentions *The Sash* used against prisoners on two other occasions in his memoir, including by orderlies, who like permanent staff would almost certainly have been from Protestant backgrounds: "the orderlies began their daily session of drumming out and whistling The Sash My Father Wore," and, following a cell disinfection, an orderly states "'See how yous like that. See how yous like that.' Then he began singing the only song he knew – The Sash."[392] These references indicate a high level of resentment on both sides. The division between staff/ orderlies and republican prisoners was apparently also conveyed with the wearing of actual sashes, as suggested by Peadar Whelan: "Once, as the rosary was being said and the Hail Mary recited, in response to 'Hail Mary, full of grace, a screw walking in the wing said, 'She's only a fucking whore.' We were incensed. We were 'Fenian bastards', to the point where a screw on the Twelfth brought in his sash which he lent to an orderly who paraded around the wing wearing it, to wind us up."[393] There is a pejorative tone towards the orderlies in both these stories. For example, the suggestion that *The Sash* was the only song the orderly knew implies ignorance or parochialism. Whelan's statement that the individual in his story only wore a sash "to wind us up" may also reflect an opinion that the Orange Order's protection and display of its traditions is motivated by a desire to irritate and antagonise, and is thus less legitimate or authentic than Irish nationalist traditions.

There are various other references in the sources examined here to republican interaction with Orangeism. Discussing his time in Long Kesh, Adams describes how "Outside on the Blairis Cemetery Road an Orangeman was beating his brains out on a Lambeg drum" and "I hear the

[392] Sands, p. 47; p. 111.
[393] Campbell et al p. 37.

Loyalist cages are having a Twelfth parade."[394] These references contribute to an impression of the republican prisoners under siege. From Orangemen outside, loyalist parades in nearby cages, staff singing *The Sash* and orderlies wearing them, these hostile interactions evoke at best claustrophobia and possibly encroaching danger for the surrounded republicans.

It is not clear whether the drummer in Adams' anecdote is coincidentally near the prison, or actively attempting to taunt prisoners. There was less room for ambiguity in the more intense context of the protesting period. A story from Thomas Loughlin regarding Martin Hurson's death describes how: "That night a group of Orange bandsmen gathered outside the camp and beat Lambeg drums for hours."[395] Loughlin suggests that this musically-expressed, and produced, division was misplaced, reporting that "to many of us this was really ironic, considering that Loyalist prisoners were demanding the same rights as we were, and that the hunger strike was all about achieving those rights for all prisoners. We couldn't understand them. Their attitude of 'die, you bastards,' was probably coming from the relatives of Loyalist prisoners."[396] As with Sands' memoir, these anecdotes have a dual function: reflecting contemporary divisions that were expressed and entrenched through music and reinforcing them, and thus the exclusive and antagonistic nature of that music, for subsequent readers.

Silence and noise I.

The Lambeg drum is notable for the volume of sound it generates, to a degree almost overpowering for both listeners and the drummer. This is music as noise: sonic dominance that

[394] Adams, 1990, pp. 78-79. The opportunity is also taken in this discussion to imply a greater republican awareness of the complexities of sectarianism and ethno-religious identity in comparison to simplistic Orange and loyalist expression, with the comment "Do you think that eejit out there beating the hell out of his drum knows all this about the Pope and King Billy." (p. 81)
[395] Campbell et al, p. 224.
[396] Ibid., p. 224.

makes any unrelated thought almost impossible. Combined with the rhythm of the drum, or the banging of doors as in Sands' description above, this submission to sound can take on an almost entrancing quality, inciting emotional responses, physical reactions and behaviours that, at their most extreme, seem almost out of control of the individual under the sound's influence. It is no coincidence that rhythmic drumming or chanting is a central part of many religious rituals, nor that high-volume, repetitive music is often found in conjunction with recreational psychoactive drug use.

On the other hand, the opposite, that is prolonged silence or disjointed, irregular noise, can also influence the behaviour of the subject. Described by Johnson and Cloonan as "sonic weaponry," this was used on a number of detainees in Northern Ireland before Lord Gardiner's minority report on the Parker Report into interrogation brought about the end of white noise as an interrogation tactic in 1972.[397] Prison life can be full of disorienting or unexpected noises: the anonymous blanket man describes the "nerve-wracking" effects of being woken up daily by staff "using their batons, boots and whatever else is good for making noise - the cell doors being of steel plates."[398] He also highlights that this caused a vengeful mirroring from prisoners, with a desire to intimidate staff through the same physiological and psychological effects: "anytime he [the Assistant Governor] comes we let him get a taste of the 'door banging' which the screws love to give us. Did you ever feel your stomach rising with nerves? That's what this door banging does to you, so we give it to him, 44 men all armed with chamber pots banging away at the cell doors."[399]

[397] Johnson and Cloonan, p. 149; DEFE 23/108; DEFE 23/111; Report of the Committee of Privy Counsellors appointed to consider authorised procedures for the interrogation of persons suspected of terrorism. Cmnd. 4901. Minority Report 10 (d). March, 1972. p. 14.
[398] Letter from H-3, p. 1.
[399] Ibid., p. 5.

Conversely, silence could be used to divide and disconcert. McKeown reports how, while prisoners were attempting to stage one of their concerts, a guard offered to let them listen to his radio, but then:

> "turned on the radio, turned off the radio, turned it on, went up and down the stations, then off once more. Twenty minutes later it still wasn't on. No radio. We should have known. So the concert was put back on. Each time one of the blokes went to say his lines, the radio blared."[400]

Another anecdote suggests radio access, or lack thereof, was a way of enforcing division between conforming and non-conforming prisoners, as "the screws even used to stop outside their [conforming] cells at night and tell them to keep their radios low in case we might hear some music or snatches of news."[401] These are clear attempts to dominate the social space through music and sound, and reinforce the power dynamics that make such domination possible. If, as Attali writes, "noise is the source of power," then the ability to enforce silence was just as much an assertion of power as the ability to make noise.[402]

In this regard, noise can be an effective instrument of social control, if only fleetingly in an otherwise mostly impotent situation. In the context of prisoners, this manifested in the banging of doors and pots to antagonise staff. The drums beaten in confrontation with republican prisoners following Hurson's death may have been a reminder to republicans to know their place, in case they were drawing strength from their comrades' sacrifices and the publicity they received. Noise as social force, particularly with make-do elements such as the use of pots, pans and objects to hand has a long history in various cultures, from the parochial coercion of the charivari in France and England to the *cacerolazo* protests common in Latin America.

[400] Campbell et al, p. 68.
[401] Ibid., p. 10.
[402] Attali, p. 6.

Noise could also be a link to the prisoners' outside community and wider movement. Adams recalls a brief period spent on remand in the H-Blocks during the dirty protest, when there was a sing-song on the anniversary of internment, following which "at about 4:00 o'clock, near the time of the original internment swoops, the entire jail was aroused by the clamor from republican cells as the lads re-created the sound of the bin lids by banging the pipes."[403] A cacophonous standoff with staff then takes place, in which "after a few minutes of frenzy and mutual abuse all fell silent for a moment," until anyone who makes a sound is threatened with solitary confinement and, in response, prisoners sing the republican song *One Road* en masse.[404] These lyrics are explicit in their assertion of Irish unity, and in the role of music as a symbol of it, describing republicans from across the island of Ireland singing the *Soldier's Song*. The attempted re-production of local women's practice of banging bin lids on the ground during internment raids demonstrates how integral this noise-making was to memories of those events, its capacity to evoke and symbolise them later, and how outside responses to imprisonment could become part of prison-based culture.

This scene is indicative of the combination of the broad-brush and the local, and the elevation of the latter to the former, in republican symbolism and myth-making. Being from west Belfast and having been interned himself, Adams would have been highly familiar with the bin lids phenomenon, but it is improbable that every prisoner around him had witnessed it firsthand. The republicans from Dublin, Cork and Donegal invoked in *One Road* likely would not have. In the less than ten years between the introduction of internment and Adams' H-Blocks experience, republican cultural emphasis on unity and shared communal bonds had converted this localised

[403] Adams, 1996, p. 269. As always, this must be read as potentially embellished for the audience: held in a cell by himself, it is unlikely Adams could discern what was happening in "the entire jail."
[404] Ibid, pp. 269-271.

practice into a symbol of the wider movement, with the power to rouse and reinforce commitment much more broadly.

Along with conveying hostility from prisoners to prison staff, from outside communities towards prisoners, and from prisoners and their communities to the issue of imprisonment, noise was also employed in confrontations between prisoners. Hughes describes an incident in which noise was used by a group of republican prisoners to attempt to obfuscate, and express disapproval of, his order that they resist forced washes and actively take on staff who attempt to conduct them:

> "We tried for about two hours that night to forward the message to H3 without success. Then we realised that they must in fact be receiving the message but didn't want to understand it. Later I learnt from men in that Block that as soon as they heard the message shouted over their hearts had sunk. Morale was already low following the beatings that day and the brutal treatment they had been receiving for some time. The thought of actively fighting with the screws filled them with horror and dismay. There was a form of open rebellion. As the message was being repeatedly shouted over to them some men in the wing banged on the pipes making noise so that the message could not be understood. But everyone had already heard it."[405]

This use of noise to disrupt communication is a subversion of the more common, collaborative manipulation of the physical environment to communicate messages "between prisoners through tapping and drumming in code," highlighted by Lloyd as not only prevalent in the H-Blocks but also "familiar from almost all prison narratives."[406] This recollection further underlines how noise can be a functional and emotional act of disobedience, as it appeared to disrupt the message, or at least make Hughes think that it had, as well as being a release of anger and frustration. It is also noteworthy as evidence of dissent and dissatisfaction within the prison

[405] McKeown, p. 61.
[406] Lloyd, p. 144.

paramilitary group. As with the tensions over drilling in Long Kesh, this is a counterpoint to the more dominant imagery of unified republican cultural practices utilised to express solidarity and power against prison staff or orderlies.

Mills and Boon, Davis and Guevara: Cultural Practices at Armagh.

While the male paramilitary prisoners at the Maze during this period were divided into conforming, non-conforming and Special Category inmates, there was another constituency of politically-motivated prisoners: women, the vast majority of whom were republican, held at HMP Armagh. "One in twenty prisoners detained during the 'Troubles' in Northern Ireland was a woman," Corcoran states, although, as she notes, there is comparatively little source material available on female prisoners' cultural practices or wider experience.[407] There were very few loyalist female prisoners, although those that did exist were also held at Armagh, meaning most literature is focused on republicans.[408] Female republican prisoners also mounted protests, alongside their male counterparts. Prisoners in Armagh began a no-work protest in response to the ending of Special Category Status, followed by their own dirty protest from February 1980. Female prisoners were not required to wear uniform, precluding the possibility of a blanket protest. However, tensions surrounding political status escalated over matters of clothing as "in Long-Kesh male prisoners spurned the prison uniform to assert their political identity, in a similar metonymic move Armagh women used their clothes to improvise IRA uniforms."[409] An incident report from 12 February 1980, the beginning of the protest, stated that "thirty of the female protesting prisoners in Armagh Prison held a parade in 'B' exercise yard on Sunday 3

[407] Corcoran, p. xvii.
[408] See 'The real life inside story of life behind bars for these four woman', *Belfast Telegraph*, 26 July 2012, p. 30 cols. a-f. [sic]
[409] Aretxaga, pp. 123-148, p. 127.

February. They were dressed in black paramilitary uniforms and carried three flags."[410] A subsequent search of the thirty-three non-conforming cells in the prison in February 1980 found "black gloves, black berets, black skirts, black pullovers, flags, leather uniform belts and other items."[411]

This paraphernalia and the act of parading likely played a similar role for republican women in Armagh as for loyalists in Long Kesh: demonstrating belonging to their wider movement, their collective identity as politically-motivated prisoners, and asserting their own power and capacity to organise in the face of prison authorities. It was also an opportunity to develop a specifically female republican prison-based paramilitary culture. Within republican protesting prisoners, such a parade was only possible for women: having never been required to wear prison uniform they did not have the opportunity to reject it, and thus were not almost entirely confined to their cells as a result of nakedness, as men were. This may have created a stronger impetus to assert their presence through parading, in solidarity with male comrades but also as a reminder to the republican movement that female prisoners had their own, distinct role to play in the protests.

This greater ability to undertake cultural practices in Armagh than at the Maze was not limited to parading: differences in the prison regimes affected other activities, including access to music. Protesting prisoners had several privileges only available to conforming prisoners at the Maze, even if only by default. A memo on protesting prisoners at Armagh in November 1978 stated that "one record-player is available, and the prisoners who work get records sent in and as some of these prisoners are on the same wing (B) they play for all… Transistor radios are allowed for remand prisoners, as most of our "protestors" were on remand for a long period they

[410] 'Armagh Prison - Protest Action by Non Conforming Prisoners,' E N Barry to PS/ Mr Alison, 12 February 1980. NIO/12/130A.
[411] Ibid.

took advantage of this and had one sent in."[412] Armagh non-conforming prisoners did not have to solely rely on the working prisoners on their wing playing records they could hear, as their daily schedule included "evening association" at 1700 hrs, where they might partake in "T.V. games such as table tennis, cards, play records."[413]

The culture of Armagh paramilitary prisoners appears to have been analogous to that of the men in the Maze. An internee at the prison described that "we used to read anything from Mills and Boon to Angela Davis and Jackson, Che Guevara," suggesting a cultural fusion and amalgamation similar to that described by Adams, Whalen and others.[414] Similarly, popular music was also a feature, including more politically-influenced mainstream songs: one former prisoner recalls a "party" at which she sang David Essex's *Gonna Make You a Star*, and another describes a fellow inmate who would, like Sands, play guitar and sing *Me and Bobby McGee*.[415] Margaretta D'Arcy, a playwright and activist who was held with republicans in Armagh following her protest outside the prison, describes how:

> "a lot of the time was spent in singing pop songs. [...] New songs would be sent in and exchanged. If there was a favourite song being sung on the radio in the workshop, some of the girls in the yard would crowd up against the wall listening. Sentimental love songs (such as Rod Stewart's) would soothe, and make an escape route to a world of romance and tenderness."[416]

As has been noted with regards to male prisoners, these were primarily young women, cut off from familial and social ties. The solidarity and purpose of paramilitary imprisonment, and the

[412] "Prisoners Protesting," 7 November 1978, p. 2, NIO/12/122A.
[413] "Prisoners (Protestors) Monday to Friday" [sic], HMP Armagh, NIO/12/122A.
[414] Corcoran, p. 125.
[415] Brady, Evelyn et al, *In the Footsteps of Anne: Stories of Republican Women Ex-Prisoners*, (Belfast: Shanway, 2011), p. 52; p. 75.
[416] D'Arcy, Margaretta, *Tell Them Everything*, (London: Pluto Press, 1981), p. 71.

protesting period specifically, could not fully distract from these losses. Pop music was a valuable way through which this inaccessible heterosexual "romance and tenderness" could be conjured up or imagined. This process was likely more successful at Armagh than for the protesting male prisoners at the Maze, as original recordings could be heard, rather than the approximations necessitated by the H-Block conditions that may have limited the "escape route" effect.

The practice of "welcoming" new prisoners was also a feature, as was the use of republican songs. D'Arcy highlights that "there is always a sing-song for new arrivals on their first night: we all must have a song ready. [...] We try to remember snatches of other songs. Liz is very good, she sings the H-Block song: 'I'll wear no convict's uniform, nor meekly serve my time/ That Britain might brand Ireland's fight one hundred years of crime."[417] This description is similar to the various H-Block sing-songs described above. The choice of "The H-Block Song," which refers specifically to the male prisoner experience, by Armagh prisoners is noteworthy, suggesting a desire to draw links of solidarity but also perhaps reinforcing the perception that the male struggle was the real or primary one. D'Arcy is writing as an outsider and may have picked up on the use of this song among more shared narratives: she also references *Four Green Fields* sung after this piece. However, she repeats the above lyrics later, with the comments that "the singing of the rebel songs binds us together as we yell out behind closed doors, and we know that in so many other places the Irish rebels are singing such songs together - in the Kesh, in Portlaoise, Limerick and the jails in Britain, and in clubs and gatherings of Irish people all over the world. For a time at least the sentimental ballads create the simple sense of unity."[418] This suggests intentional use of music to draw links between the prisoners and those in "the Kesh" and elsewhere, along with their wider movement and supporters. This may have been

[417] Ibid., p. 52.
[418] Ibid., p. 88.

even more pressing than for the men in the H-Blocks, given the comparatively much smaller, more isolated nature of the Armagh cohort.

The women behind the wire: Fusing identities.

The position of female prisoners in the republican prison struggle was not only complicated by their comparatively small number and separate accommodation. As stated above, there is a significant gendered element to the "hero-martyr" eulogised by republican ideology. The republican movement in general and the prisoner issue in particular skewed male: with the exception of strip-searching and force-feeding, both of which also affected men, most prison-related protests, both outside and inside prison walls, were defined and led by the men at Long Kesh/ Maze. It was the bearded, gaunt blanket man who symbolised the prison struggle in the eyes of the wider movement and general public, and images of paramilitary members, spokespeople, prominent Sinn Féin activists and community leaders tended to be mostly male.

Despite overtures towards broadening the republican movement with connections to other struggles, the communities from which paramilitaries came were also subject to conservative, Catholic-influenced social forces regarding gender roles that could be found in similar, yet far less politicised, environs across Ireland or Irish diaspora communities. Paramilitary machismo and the male-dominated history of republican struggle mapped onto this, but its socio-cultural roots were far deeper. In this regard, there was an unease around the female paramilitary, in both her combatant and prisoner manifestation. "First off, if we were in prison we weren't having wee ones which is what we were supposed to be doing. I think if my husband could have got me pregnant in jail he would have, because that was what he was supposed to be doing," one former

prisoner told Dowler, adding: "A lot of the men think I'm wild because I did my whack, because women aren't supposed to be doing the same thing that the men are in the war."[419]

This idea of female prisoners as "wild" or not "supposed to be doing the same thing" as men was exacerbated by their participation in the dirty protest. Women actively creating such degrading conditions, along with the additional taboo of menstrual blood as an instrument with which to do so, created a complication in terms of their status. These were paramilitary prisoners, many of whom had committed violent crimes, but who could not be fully incorporated into the "endurance and strength" narrative of the male prison struggle by virtue of their gender. On the other hand, such assertive action made them difficult to categorise as vulnerable, more wholesome victims along wider socio-cultural lines. Aretxaga argues that the tendency of republicans and clergy to refer to the prisoners as "girls" indicates that "their cultural space was in this sense liminal. Neither men nor completely women, they were perceived at a general social level as gender neutral," contributing to the "overshadowing" of female prisoners that also arose from their greater privileges regarding uniform.[420]

The uncertain and complicated status of the prisoners at Armagh can be seen reflected in their own cultural practices. D'Arcy's recollections suggest an intentional, perhaps even self-conscious, emphasis on establishing unity and solidarity with male protesting prisoners through song. This can be understood as an attempt to demonstrate their relevance to and participation in

[419] Dowler, p. 82.
[420] Aretxaga, p. 138. I would suggest this is partially a matter of vernacular rather than an attempt to infantilise: variations of "girls," "lads," and "boys" might be applied to people way beyond childhood or adolescence as a means of demonstrating familiarity, or simply as a feature of common speech, by some in Northern Ireland. There are also numerous examples of prisoners in Armagh referred to as "women" in the republican press and campaign material ('March and Rally: Support 'the Blanket Men' and the Gallant Women in Armagh Jail', (Notice), *The Irish News*, 29 February 1980, p. 2 col. i; 'Strip-searches in Armagh: immoral, degrading and sordid', *An Phoblacht/Republican News*, 22 September 1983, p.7, cols.a-e). However, Aretxaga's broader point that they were construed as "neither men nor completely women" stands.

the struggle, knowing the greater privileges female prisoners could access and their marginalisation in the movement may have meant the male prisoners did not share this view. However, rather than apologising for or attempting to hide this less restricted position, Armagh prisoners turned it to their own advantage, by attempting to undertake parades that symbolised even further solidarity. Furthermore, the incorporation of activities that could be stereotypically defined as feminine into prison life, such as reading Mills and Boon or listening to Rod Stewart for his music's romantic connotations, suggests that female prisoners did not share their wider movement's rigid boundary between the "feminine" and the "paramilitary," nor a sense that one undermined the other.

In this regard, music performed similar functions for the women of Armagh as for the men of the Maze, allowing them to build and express solidarity, let off steam through political singing and engage with more complex, personal emotions through popular music. In amalgamating the paramilitary and the feminine, the use of music and similar practices also contributed to the development of a specific paramilitary prisoner culture at Armagh that, in terms of the role of women, foreshadowed wider cultural change in the outside movement. However, the female paramilitary prisoner experience was also subject to various forces, including the nature of the prison regime and imported socio-cultural tropes regarding gender, that kept both the cultural and prison struggle at Armagh firmly secondary to events at the Maze.

Music during the hunger strikes.

The culmination of the republican protests at the Maze and Armagh was the hunger strikes of 1980 and 1981. The solidarity and ability to endure established in the years from 1976 were crucial to these campaigns, as was the understanding that these features could be wielded as

weapons against the enemy. The first republican hunger strike took place between 27th October 1980 and 18th December 1980, when it was called off amidst confusion before any fatalities occurred. Three prisoners in Armagh also joined the strike. The subsequent campaign began on 1st March 1981, with Bobby Sands' refusal of food, and ended on 3rd October that year, following the deaths of ten PIRA and INLA prisoners. As with the preceding protests, the focus of this campaign was the right to political status, focused around five demands: the right not to wear prison uniform; the right not to perform prison work; free association; the right to organise recreational facilities and one visit, letter and parcel per week; and full restoration of remission lost on the protest.[421] The failure of the 1980 hunger strike to win these demands and the incoherent manner in which it ended increased pressure on prisoners to follow the 1981 campaign to its end. The way this strike was structured also increased this momentum. Instead of beginning the hunger strike en masse and thus likely incurring multiple fatalities during a similar period, the hunger strike of 1981 followed a relay pattern, in which Sands began his strike alone and subsequent prisoners joined at staggered intervals. This created the sense that the campaign could continue indefinitely, and focused attention around one individual, which would be highly effective in terms of wider mobilisation around Sands and his legacy. Each prisoner who joined the strike had the burden of their recently lost comrades upon their shoulders, and the pressure to keep that chain unbroken.

This emotional pressure, felt not only by those directly engaged in the hunger strikes but also their supporters in the prison, was apparent in the use of music during this period. Concerts and sing-songs became more charged; connections with loved ones facilitated through popular music were more necessary but more painful; the pains of imprisonment such music soothed were more acute. Staff, who were not immune from the tension surrounding the strikes even if they

[421] 'H-Block group priest opposes hunger-strike', *The Irish Times*, 3 March 1981, p. 6 cols. b-d.

approached it from the other side, also used music as a means of expressing themselves. As seen above, loyalist sympathisers outside the prison responded to the death of a hunger striker by playing the Lambeg drum, suggesting, by that point, the theoretically cross-paramilitary demands of the political status protests had become a fully republican domain.

One particularly emotional concert described by Beresford took place on Sands' birthday, a week in to his fast, at which "Jake sang 'Skibereen,' Bobby sang his haunting composition, 'Back Home in Derry,' and Blessed Noel Quinn from Bellaghy sang 'My Little Armalite:'"[422] Conversely, Tomboy Loudon states that "on Bobby's birthday, Monday 9 March, we had a singsong and sung all the songs he had written and we called him for a speech; he got up to the door and thanked the lads for a great concert and said he would have given us one himself, but it was too cold to stand at the door."[423] This raises the inherent and unavoidable problems with the use of such sources: Loudon or the prisoners interviewed by Beresford (or both) may have misremembered, or may be referring to separate events on the same day, one of which Sands could sing at and one he could not. Nevertheless, despite this apparent inaccuracy and the possibility of many others in the recollections referred to in this thesis, I will assume that the basic constituent parts of the anecdotes are relevant, even if not precisely accurate. Even if these songs were not sung on that day, they were presumably part of the general milieu if they could be mistakenly substituted for ones that were. Similarly, whether or not Sands sung at his birthday concert, it seems reasonable to assume from the two sources that such an event did happen.

My Little Armalite, referenced in the previous chapter, stands out as a rebel song that extols the virtues of the Provisionals specifically, rather than general Irish nationalism/ republicanism. It is

[422] Ibid., p. 89.
[423] Campbell et al, p. 155.

an unusually, although not uniquely, contemporary and partisan reference in comparison to the historical, broadly nationalist pieces which appear more frequently in prisoners' memoirs or biographies. It is unclear whether this is an accurate portrayal of the most popular songs or an attempt on behalf of the authors to appeal to a larger audience through invoking the most well-known and accessible pieces. Older songs do not require the reader to endorse the PIRA and its military activities in the way *My Little Armalite* does, and imbue the prison anecdote with a sense of timelessness and historical legitimacy. Even for a casual reader unfamiliar with the contents of the songs, the title has strikingly violent connotations in comparison to the nostalgia or romanticism conveyed by names such as *Skibbereen* and *Back Home in Derry*.

Beresford also describes Francis Hughes as singing during his own hunger strike. This included another instance of *Kevin Barry* and *Tom Williams*, along with *Four Green Fields*, twenty-one days into his hunger strike when the resonance of the first two pieces in particular would surely have been exceptionally strong.[424] This was a "farewell concert," as Sands had been moved to the prison hospital after three weeks of his own fast, and it was assumed Hughes would be too. Even though those who committed to the strike were instructed to expect and prepare for death, there would have uncertainty as to whether it would actually happen. While Sands and Hughes were still alive, there was no way to predict how long the campaign would last or how it would end. It is impossible to imagine the emotional maelstrom experienced by prisoners during this period, both those on hunger strike and in their vicinity.

[424] Beresford, p. 161.

Comfort and emotional release.

The set canon of republican song, and traditional times for sing-songs and concerts, was therefore likely a comfort for its lyrical content and symbolic connections, and in providing a formula for interaction and support that could be spontaneously begun and required little to no innovation. Many singers have one or two faithful pieces to fall back on, but this must have been especially beneficial to Sands and Hughes in the examples above, after weeks without food and the corresponding lack of energy and mental sharpness that entailed. The fact that the pieces were well-known to many involved also meant they could be joined in with or picked up by others, preventing potential embarrassment if the hunger striker was too weak to continue.

The comfort aspect came in large part from the music's standing in the wider community and republican movement, for its political content and for the links to life outside that it symbolised. This was the music that many of these men would have heard in the pubs, clubs, sporting situations and possibly even homes of their pre-prison life. Even if the nature of their upbringing or location meant they had not, this music could still be identified with as the culture of the republican movement and the life of the archetypal republican prisoner. As suggested in Adams' bin lids story, symbolic cultural artefacts did not need to have been experienced personally to resonate on a profound level. Such musical practices may also have been beneficial through harking back to an earlier, arguably easier prison period, and through that briefly reducing the stress of their immediate context. As previously argued, much of the template for republican prison identity and camaraderie during the modern conflict was forged in the Long Kesh cages, especially by those Lloyd terms "the younger generation of Provisionals, particularly the 'coffee-drinking intelligentsia' of Cage Eleven," amongst whom Sands and other leading

individuals had "effectively cut their political teeth."[425] The maintenance of practices established during this period may have therefore been imbued with nostalgia for the cages, as unlikely as that could have seemed at the time prisoners inhabited them.

Mainstream and popular music could also provide a source of comfort and emotional release by invoking an easier or simpler time. This was a means of forging or reiterating bonds in a context in which material sources of comfort and connection were essentially non-existent. Along with the overtly political pieces described above, Beresford describes that McFarlane performed *Big Yellow Taxi* at Sands' 1981 birthday concert.[426] As discussed earlier, this song aligns republicans engaging with it with certain political and cultural themes, but is politically-tinged pop rather than the kind of assertion of identity and ideology contained in and facilitated by rebel songs. *Big Yellow Taxi* is a gently anti-establishment folk piece bemoaning the infringement of humans and capitalism on the natural environment, an issue that was unlikely to have been at the forefront of protesting prisoners' minds during the hunger strikes. However, its lyrics may have resonated on a personal level against the backdrop of the harsh environment of the H-Blocks and the acute deprivation of freedom and separation from loved ones experienced by the prisoners.

There is also a sense in Beresford's description of this concert that the prisoners are giving Sands the only thing that they can, in lieu of material items. This is further underlined by another episode in the same book, in which the fifth hunger striker to die, Joe McDonnell, realises towards the end of his fast that his wife, Goretti, and sister's birthdays are coming up. Beresford describes that: "He was worried that he did not have anything to give them. So he hummed a song for Goretti, as her present. It was Dr Hook's: 'We never got to hear those

[425] Lloyd. p. 141.
[426] Beresford, p. 89.

violins.'"[427] This underlines the value of song, including popular music, as a means of expression and communication when nothing else was available. Those lyrics, from *More Like the Movies*, may have held special significance for the couple or simply express a feeling that McDonnell was unable to, but in either case demonstrate the capacity of popular music to function as emotional shorthand amongst a group with similar cultural references.

Conversely, popular music could be valued precisely because of its lack of meaning and emotional impact. McKeown, who was on hunger strike for seventy days in 1981, describes that while in hospital during his fast:

> "a strange thing that occurred was a change in my taste in music. Normally I could enjoy most types of music, with the exception of Country and Western. I loathe it, yet during the latter part of the fast it was the only music I could listen to. The only thing I can figure is that it's so boring and repetitive that you don't have to think about it - just switch it on and let it drone away."[428]

In many instances examined in this thesis, music is intertwined with fundamental aspects of personal and political identity, with songs, lyrics and melodies strengthening that identity and used as a symbol of it. However, the close relationship between music and identity that facilitates this function also means engagement with a new musical style or genre can allow the adoption or "trying on", however brief or superficial, of a new identity or persona. As McKeown's description of the genre as "boring and repetitive" suggests, there may have been specific features of country music that were, to him, conducive to mindlessness and escapism. It is possible that this phenomenon was enhanced as, having never had any interest in country music, this style carried no memories or associations that could have caused mental strain during

[427] Ibid., p. 292.
[428] Campbell et al, p. 246.

this already highly taxing time. Familiarity with certain genres brought comfort in some instances, but the same properties could also cause emotional pain and distress.

Staff solidarity and stress.

Music that appeared to have nothing to do with the conflict could also be appropriated for political purposes, as seen in the previous chapter. In the heightened emotional period of the hunger strike, such coding or "lyrical drift" could have a particularly taunting tone.[429] As Kent argues, "music is peaceful or unpeaceful not because of the inherent character of the music itself, but because of the way it is used," allowing otherwise innocuous pieces to take on context-dependent political meaning.[430] Republican prisoner Kevin Campbell recalls that "the screws who were doing the check were whistling the tune "Oh What a Beautiful Morning," following the death of Bobby Sands overnight.[431] This is not the only reference from prisoners that suggests staff manipulated apolitical music to antagonise or annoy prisoners. A piece by a republican prisoner describes: "Talking of the visiting room in Long Kesh, the piped music they play there is picked by a screw who has developed a cruel sense of humour. As prisoners sit in the visiting boxes with their partners, two songs get played rather too often. They are: 'You're My Favourite Waste of Time' and 'Torn Between Two Lovers.'"[432] This claim appears in a piece entitled 'Prison Satire,' meaning that it may not be entirely reflective of reality. However, even if this story is more of a narrative device than accurate recollection, it paints an emotive, effective picture through the invocation of well-known, misappropriated songs.

[429] Rolston, 2001, p. 55.
[430] Kent, p. 104.
[431] Campbell et al, p. 169.
[432] 'Prison Satire: The Red Spider,' *Journal of Prisoners on Prison*, Vol. 7 No. 1, 1996 - 1997. p. 35.

In the case that such claims are accurate, they reflect the capacity of song lyrics to work on multiple levels simultaneously. It would be clear to prisoners what staff were trying to convey, but, unlike with overtly political music, there is a degree of plausible deniability over whether such songs were played "too often." Staff were also under considerable emotional strain as a result of the conditions of the prison, the hostility of the prisoners and fear of reprisals on the outside.[433] More than fifteen prison officers in Northern Ireland prisons were killed during the years of protest, including the deputy governor of the Maze, Albert Miles, shot dead at his home on 26th November 1978.[434] One former prison officer interviewed by Crawford describes the intense emotional pressure felt by staff:

> "The truth is, the prison officers were frightened, they knew it had got way out of control. That's why they drank themselves into oblivion, stopped going home as often, and drove like mad men. They were scared, and their families were scared. They suddenly caught on - they had been used and they were regarded as expendable. When they got shot nobody gave a damn. The whole bloody thing was despicable."[435]

While this fear and sense of being "expendable" appears to have been mainly based on the possibility of being targeted outside the prison, there were also, as has been shown above, confrontations with prisoners inside the H-Blocks. The intense solidarity and organised subversion of republican prisoners during this time likely contributed to a sense of physical danger in the prison, particularly during times where numerous prisoners could be encountered together, such as forced washes. Protesting prisoners were mostly isolated individually or in pairs, and at a clear physical disadvantage in comparison to uniformed, likely healthier prison

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[433] The effects of the conflict were not lessened once they had come off shift: 29 prison staff members were killed during the period 1962 - 2000, the vast majority by the IRA (http://www.pst-ni.co.uk/memorials.htm). At least two were killed by the UVF, and other loyalists were also considered a danger.
[434] 'Victim was head of H-Block,' *Belfast Telegraph*, 27 November 1978, p. 1 cols. b-i.
[435] Crawford, p. 175.

staff. Nevertheless, as Billy Wright describes, the image of the blanket man, dirty protester or hunger striker was able to strike fear into an opponent precisely because of his capacity to weaken, degrade and deprive himself. The nature of this prison nucleus, underlined by the threat of physical force from the movement outside, created a need for emotional release on behalf of the staff themselves, through the political music described above, the ability to toy with prisoners via radio access, or the manipulation of apolitical pieces.

The more powerful the prisoners appeared to be, the stronger this desire to undermine them likely became. Sands' death was the apex of the republican prison struggle, built on years of constructing and emphasising endurance, sacrifice and solidarity. It is unlikely that any straightforward show of strength or force would have made much impact on the prisoners against this emotional backdrop. However, to denigrate Sands, lampoon his martyrdom and deny the respect he had generated amongst prisoner-supporters and those on the outside with the use of *Oh, What a Beautiful Morning* may have felt like a recoup of this power, however temporarily. The black humour involved in these songs also likely facilitated solidarity, bonding and camaraderie between staff members that helped them weather the stresses of their working environment, particularly if they felt abandoned by wider or senior-level support.

The end of the protests and the beginning of the myth.

The republican hunger strike was called off on 3rd October, 1981, rendered unworkable by families allowing medical intervention for their sons, husbands and brothers. Prisoners were awarded the majority of their demands a few days after its end, including the abolition of uniform requirements, freer association and a review of prison work.[436] On one level, the hunger

[436] Taylor, 1998, p. 252.

strikes and wider protests failed: political status had not been achieved, ten men were dead and the intervention of prisoners' families suggested a loss of paramilitary control over its campaign, and of wider momentum around and faith in those actions. However, this was not how the legacy of the protests would play out, within or outside the prison. The protests consolidated the leading role of the prisoners in the wider republican movement, in practical and symbolic terms, and changed that movement drastically. The mobilisation around the H-Blocks during this period had a profound impact on broadening the republican struggle, resulting in "the shift in the internal balance of power in the republican movement, which the hunger strike facilitated. At one level, this came as a result of the significant increase in support for republicanism, which brought new people, with fresh perspectives, into the movement."[437] These new people and perspectives were not necessarily as committed to or versed in the violent campaign as the republican core, contributing to an increase in community activism, alongside direct action, that in turn better facilitated cultural events.

Other tactics originating from and around the prisoners shaped the movement more generally. In particular, the election of Sands as MP for Fermanagh and South Tyrone in the 9th April 1981 by-election, a little over a month into his hunger strike, was transformative for the following decades as the beginning of Sinn Féin's turn towards the ballot box. Symbolically, the protests, individual figures within them and the bonding experience generated by participants loomed large within cultural production and expression for the rest of the conflict and beyond. Republicanism did not exist in a vacuum, and the consolidation and assertiveness of the movement that reverberated from the prison protests effected a corresponding fear and insecurity in loyalist prisoners and their communities, which was also expressed musically.

[437] Frampton, p. 11.

The communal and political impact of the prison struggle outside would not have been possible without the dynamics established within the prison. As has been argued, music and sound played a significant role in the shaping, reinforcement and assertion of various aspects required to maintain and move the protests forward: emotional management and release, the establishment and promotion of particular values, bonding, communication, political commitment, peer pressure and demonstrations of authority both against staff and within the republican collective were all facilitated musically. Musical practices during the protests were inextricable from the prison conditions that shaped them. The isolation of the prisoners from each other and from resources and equipment necessitated a far more oral focus and a reliance on memory and cooperation in order to produce musical experiences. The emotions that contributed to and were engaged with by these musical practices were also heightened by the stresses of the protests and the conditions they created, meaning the use of music at every level, from escapism to antagonism, was intensified.

This distinction in the use of music between protesting and conforming prisoners contributed to the incorporation of the processes of cultural production, as well as the actual songs, writings and other artefacts produced, into republican imagery and mythology. Distinctions in musical resources and privileges were also a marker of difference between male and female republican prisoners. These relative advantages contributed to the supporting, secondary role of the Armagh protests and their comparative erasure compared to actions at the Maze. They also provided a forum through which female republican prisoners could negotiate the competing demands of their gender roles and paramilitary involvement, and forge their own cultural amalgamation and expression.

The ending of the protests brought about a new penal regime that approximated the rights and freedoms of the Long Kesh compound, within the distinct spatial layout of the H-Blocks. While

the practical elements of the use of music returned, the context which shaped them and themes they conveyed were utterly changed by the trauma, solidarity and self-awareness generated by the protesting period. The foundations had been laid in the preceding phase of imprisonment, but the period of 1976 - 1981 showed both republicans and loyalists unequivocally that the prison could be a front in the wider struggle and a tool through which to build, direct and shape the paramilitary movement and its communal support. Music would be integral to keeping this legacy at the forefront of cultural expression both inside and outside the prison, and to adapting these features to the changing demands of the following decades.

Chapter Four: Music in the Prisons 3: Normalisation, 1982 - 2000.

Following the end of the 1981 hunger strike, penal policy in Northern Ireland transitioned into what has been termed "normalisation" or "managerialism," an approach which Shirlow and McEvoy describe as "characterised by a view of prisons not so much as a vehicle for the 'defeat' of political violence but rather as places which can at best manage the consequences of such violence, or at least seek to avoid mismanagement which will in turn provoke further violence or social unrest."[438] This development reflected the polarisation and disruption that had occurred on the outside world as a consequence of the prisoners' protests, and the use of the prison by both inmates and their wider movements as a potent driving force and battleground in the broader struggle.

The protests had also generated high levels of external scrutiny, which pressured the government and prison authorities to improve practices and conditions. SC Jackson noted in 1985 that "we have to bear in mind that the Northern Ireland prison system has been the subject on the one hand of more politically motivated disruption and protest by prisoners and, on the other, of more intense examination by national and international humanitarian bodies than any prison system in Western Europe, and possibly in the world. In such circumstances, the fact that the Northern Ireland prison system and its operation can stand comparison with the best elsewhere is of considerable political benefit to the UK Government."[439] For the most part, the years between the end of the hunger strike and the beginning of the peace process releases were characterised by a high level of autonomy for prisoners and an atmosphere of increased, albeit sometimes uneasy, cooperation between prisoners and staff.

[438] Shirlow and McEvoy, p. 31.
[439] NIO/12/545A. 'Remission,' SC Jackson to Mr Bickham, on behalf of Palmer. 15 August 1985, pp. 2-3.

As a result of these comparatively relaxed conditions, significant resources, time and planning could be dedicated to musical expression and wider cultural practices by republican and loyalist prisoners. This was either openly facilitated by the prison regime, tacitly allowed due to improved relations with staff, or achieved illicitly through manipulation of the greater freedoms available. This change had two distinct but related effects on the use of music by prisoners during this period. The first was the development of a more considered, self-referential culture of political music, which embedded recent events, and analysis of them, into the paramilitary canon. The tropes, figures and imagery used in this process amalgamated long-standing historical themes with more contemporary references, contributing to a distinct politically-motivated prisoner identity particular to this period. Republican concerts, plays, parades, and even a recording responded to the new context of politically-motivated prisoners post-1981, entrenching the prominence of prisoners in the wider movement's cultural struggle, and the significance of that struggle to prison life.

There was also greater freedom to focus on the entertainment and social aspects of musical production for their own sake, rather than these practices being shaped by the acute pressure and psychological demands of the protests. This was not separate from the political use of music, and in fact facilitated experimentation and creativity in politically-influenced musical expression. Engagement with popular music and related social life reported by prisoners as integral to H-Block culture in the 1980s and 1990s indicates differences in how the respective paramilitaries ran their prison factions. Representations of prison social life during this period in later recollections also reflect a persistent cultural struggle over narratives of the conflict and the role of paramilitary imprisonment within it. The bonds and practices formed and reinforced by this myth-making and creativity, both amongst prisoners and between the prison group and their outside movement, were also significant for the post-conflict "former politically-motivated prisoner" culture that began to develop in the mid-1990s.

The 1980s: Segregation, spectaculars and symbols in the aftermath of the republican protests.

In order to provide a context for the developments in music addressed below, I must examine the struggles over identity and representation that took place within the Maze in the more immediate post-protest period. These contributed to the greater confidence displayed in later uses of music. Most of the sources I have found which refer to prison music following the end of the protests date from around 1990 onwards. Whether this reflects a greater focus on music and cultural activities amongst prisoners during the 1990s, or simply an inconsistency in the source material that has been preserved, is unclear.[440]

Despite the "normalisation" of the post-hunger strike period, the struggle for control of the prison and demonstrations of that perceived control did not end in October 1981. The majority of republicans conformed to the prison regime from November 1982.[441] Loyalists, in contrast, continued protest campaigns: 117 loyalists refused to conform between autumn 1982 and February 1984 over the de facto existence of, rather than established right to, segregation by paramilitary allegiance in the prison, and the sense that non-conforming loyalists were being unfairly punished when republicans were claiming to conform, but were not in fact doing so.[442] This protest can be linked to wider insecurity over identity and status which may have reflected

[440] This discrepancy in material may reflect a peak in attention on prisoners during the protests, followed by less publicity during the comparatively calm rest of the 1980s, and a subsequent increase in focus as prisoner releases became an issue around the mid-1990s. As will be seen in the following chapter, there were still mobilisations in the 1980s around strip-searching, segregation, repatriation and general prisoner welfare, but not with the intensity of the preceding years.
[441] "Note for the record: On the 2 November 1982 the Republican no-work protest was abandoned by all but 5 taking part. From that date these prisoners conformed fully with Prison Rules." 6/1/83. NIO/12/276.
[442] NIO/12/343A.

the loyalist view that republicans had now achieved control of the prison, meaning loyalists would be unfairly penalised or overlooked.

Managing assertions of identity.

Other contentious issues during this period suggest identity and related iconography were a concern for loyalists. Correspondence between prison authorities and government in 1982 over whether to allow a loyalist prisoner in Belfast Prison to wear a Star of David stated that "we know the connotations of this badge, and do not believe that [redacted] has any genuine religious motive for wanting it, but it is not all that easy to justify our refusal (particularly when, it seems, prisoners at Magilligan who are not Jews have in the past been allowed to wear the Star). The Star forms the background to the UDA badge - see the page from the publication "Ulster" within - but on the other hand it is also on NI postage stamps," demonstrating the difficulties inherent in decoding the mesh of emblems that constitute Northern Irish paramilitary culture.[443] There were similar concerns over loyalist use of commemorative poppies.[444] Emblems of proscribed paramilitary groups could also not be prevented from being smuggled into or made in the prison.[445]

These controversies over symbols represent issues of the right to assert identity, and negotiation of the degree to which paramilitary identity could push against prison restrictions. Such issues also established the symbols drawn upon in loyalist prisoners' musical expression of identity, particularly related to parades. They reflected an asymmetry and division in terms of self-

[443] Jackson to Truesdale, 11/1/82. NIO/12/486A.
[444] Jackson, 27/08/85. NIO/12/486A.
[445] For example: Situation report - NI Prisons. 08:30, 15/5/84 - 08:30, 16/5/84: "Maze Compound (228) (Special Category 186) At 1949 hours an alarm was accidentally set off at G3 gate. The area was checked and all found to be correct. A UVF badge was during a search of Compound 21 (UVF) yesterday." NIO/12/343A.

expression, between republican and loyalist prisoners and also within the latter group: UDA-related insignia was less subversive than that of the UVF, as the group was not proscribed until 1992, whereas the UVF had been proscribed in 1966. Prison authorities' response to the 1982 - 1984 loyalist protest demonstrates awareness of the impact of restricting access to music, as well as emblems. Discussions on regime changes following the end of the protest in 1984 made various references to the possibility of restricting access to radios and musical instruments entirely, or for limited periods of punishment. This suggests an understanding of the importance of such equipment to prisoners and of the connections between cultural freedoms and political struggle within the prison.[446]

As with the earlier republican protests, the loyalist campaign also had reflections on the outside, which no doubt contributed to staff hostility within the prison. A draft response to a 1984 letter presumed to be from John McMichael of the UDA arguing for special recognition for loyalist prisoners noted: "I am grateful for McMichael's concern for the safety of prison staff - it is a pity that this concern is not expressed in more practical terms when some of his Loyalist friends feel it necessary to attack staff both inside and outside prison."[447] Letters from loyalist prisoners printed in UDA publication *Ulster* levied general criticism at staff and the disciplinary measures used. One claimed that "the "screws" are all ex-warders who supervised the ex-blanket men and who can't be put on any other wing in case they are attacked and they run about the wing acting the hard men."[448] Whether this impression is accurate or more influenced by the writer's resentment, it suggests prisoner-staff relations were affected by more complex issues of authority than the loyalist-sympathising staff versus republican prisoners binary often presented in the latter's memoirs and biographies.

[446] "End of Loyalist Protest 22/2/84. The Way Forward. April 1983 - 4 July 1984. NIO/12/343A.
[447] 'Separation and Security,' WJ Kerr, Director of Operations, 20 March 1984., NIO/12/343A.
[448] 'Loyalist Prisoners' Pages', *Ulster*, July/August 1985, p. 35.

Maintaining momentum.

For their part, republicans did not simply acquiesce following the majority's decision to conform to the prison regime. The most noteworthy prison-based "spectacular" operation mounted by republicans during this period was the escape from H7 on 25 September 1983, in which thirty-eight prisoners absconded.[449] The loyalist segregation campaign was reportedly considered "a contributory factor" in the escape by Northern Ireland Secretary James Prior, as loyalists had been removed from the block in question, facilitating republican organisation.[450] The escape also followed the appointment of high-ranking republican prisoners, including Bik McFarlane, as orderlies, allowing greater observation of the workings of the block and preparation for escape from it.[451]

The "Great Escape," as it is mythologised by republicans, can be seen as an attempt to maintain momentum following the end of the republican protests, and the loss of the extreme fortifying and motivating environment the protests entailed.[452] Republican prisoners could not afford to become complacent lest they forfeit the prominent role they had achieved within the wider movement during the years following 1976. It may also have been intended to demonstrate they had not surrendered nor been rendered compliant by greater freedoms and rights. Certain republican prisoners may have been made orderlies, and all who conformed to the regime had a

[449] '27 Maze escapers still free', *The Guardian*, 26 September 1983, p. 1 cols. b-g.
[450] 'Prior vows: no hiding place for jail breakers', *Belfast Telegraph*, 26 September 1983, p. 1 col c.; p. 4 col. b.
[451] 'Not a resigning issue, says Prior', *The Guardian*, 10 February 1984, p. 5 cols. e-f. See also Report of an Inquiry
by HM Chief Inspector of Prisons into the security arrangements at HM Prison, Maze, 26 January 1984, Appendix 1 (3).
[452] 'The 38 republican prisoners who burst so dramatically out of the notorious Long Kesh H-Blocks last Sunday have proved once again - if such proof were still needed - the impossibility of defeating the republican cause.' ('IRA block-buster', *An Phoblacht/Republican News*, 29 September 1983, p. 1 col. e)

far easier life than protesting prisoners, but their allegiance to the republican movement remained primary, and any advantage would be used to further that cause.[453] As Frampton writes, "this victory was judged to have been achieved by republican prisoners being prepared to work the system in the short term, despite their misgivings, in order to secure victory in the long term."[454] The injuries, in one case fatal, inflicted upon multiple prison staff during the escape underlined this message: the official protest may have been over and a status quo of superficial co-operation reached, but the violent struggle and divisions it entailed were ongoing.[455] A 2010 album entitled *Ram Down the Gate* features the vocals of one of the escapees, Kevin Barry Artt, and purports to tell his version of events, suggesting persistent interest in and glorification of the escape.[456]

As well as these more extreme actions, republicans also manipulated day-to-day musical resources for organisational or symbolic purposes during the 1980s. A memo regarding a letter found in Armagh from the PIRA OC at the Maze compound in September 1984 describes the letter as "... a good find. It confirms the highly organised - and speedy - links which PIRA has between prisons." It also alludes to one of the ways this link is maintained, along with letters: "The mention of Farrell's not being "on the radio for a week or so" is thought to refer to the

[453] Adams' statements following the escape that "when British prisoners-of-war escaped from Nazi prisons like Colditz, they were hailed as heroes, and Irish nationalists view the H-Block escapees in the same light" and "two years ago, Mrs Thatcher described the H-Block/Armagh hunger-strike as the IRA playing their last card. Now after the dramatic H-Block escape, she claims that the government is facing its greatest prison crisis" indicate the propaganda blow the events were intended to strike: highlighting the prisoners' heroism; its continuity with that of the hunger strikers; exposing the weakness of the prison system and, by extension, the British government in relation to Northern Ireland. ('Resignation calls over prison break', *The Irish News*, 27 September 1983, p. 1 cols. b-d)
[454] Frampton, p. 189.
[455] 'Warder is killed in Maze break-out', *Belfast Telegraph*, 26 September 1983, p. 10 cols. a-g.
[456] See http://yourmanmusic.com/the_story.htm. Artt was convicted of the 1978 killing of Maze deputy governor Albert Miles, which at the time of writing (April 2019) he is attempting to overturn ('Maze escapee Kevin Barry Artt (59) secures right to renewed legal bid to overturn IRA murder conviction', *The Irish News*, 2nd April 2019). This appears to be a fairly niche recording, although Artt has lived in the USA since the escape, where it may have found an audience in the Irish republican-sympathising community in San Francisco, which is referred to on the album.

republican prisoners' habit of organising regular requests on radio programmes. These normally use only the Christian names and do not of course give the locations!"[457] This practice suggests the importance of radio and music for prisoners as a link to the outside world and each other. The communication between the Maze and Armagh implies female prisoners were a valued cog in the republican paramilitary prisoner machine, at least by 1984 and in low-level endeavours. Given that the information that could be conveyed in this manner was likely limited, this coded messaging may also have been undertaken in part as a morale boost. As with the so-called "Great Escape," the use of radio requests in this way can be understood as a reminder to the prison authorities, and to republicans themselves, that they had not been fully beaten, contained nor curtailed.

Music from the Blocks: **Reverence and reflection.**

The most spectacular musical reminder of what politically-motivated prisoners could achieve, and how they could manipulate the freedoms and resources available to them, was the 1991 recording made by a group of republican prisoners, smuggled out of the H-Blocks and sold as cassettes and later CDs, entitled *Music from the Blocks*. McKeown provides a detailed account of how he and fellow inmates secretly recorded themselves after realising one of the tape players used by prisoners for Open University classes, which were "were meant to be 'doctored' by the screws so that the recording function was no longer active" was still able to record.[458] Thus began an elaborate process of amassing the requisite equipment and performers in one cell at the same time (twice, as they were unhappy with the first recording and added to it at a later date), the use of blankets and mattresses to improve acoustics, and managing to access the cassette

[457] "Prisons - Armagh, Find of letter from PIRA OC, Maze Compound," NIO/10/7/15A.
[458] McKeown, p. 188.

player a second time.[459] Whalen highlights the recording of these tapes as "one of the most successful attempts to liberate song from the H Blocks," which is indisputable in terms of the complexity, audacity and focus of this project.[460]

However, that should not imply that other attempts were comparatively unsuccessful or failed in their aims. This recording is part of a clear continuum with other musical "liberation" attempts, including *Smash Internment,* Sands' songs and the loyalist verse composed in Long Kesh/ Maze, in both intention and practice. The prisoners behind *Music from the Blocks* took advantage of their physical surroundings and objects to hand, just as other prisoners wrote on cigarette papers, banged on doors, manipulated radios and, as will be seen below, made drums from shorts and cardboard. As I have argued throughout this thesis, there was a drive to use music for myriad purposes and in numerous contexts throughout the years of paramilitary imprisonment; prisoners experimented with what they could do at each stage. *Music from the Blocks* is also very much a product of the period in which it was made. The post-protest context of the H-Blocks and the spatial and educational facilities it entailed shaped what was possible in terms of the creation of the recording, as well as the motivation to undertake such activities as a means of maintaining momentum. The protesting period also casts an enormous shadow upon the lyrical content and related imagery.

The quality of this recording suggests a notable degree of effort involved in its production. It is mostly the occasional click and clunk of the recording function that reveals its ad hoc nature and

[459] Ibid., pp. 188 - 189.
[460] Whalen, 2014, p. 142. Whalen writes that the liner notes on his copy of *Music from the Blocks* "liken the recording session to an IRA military operation, saying that the "op was on" as "each man in turn rose to make his zig-zag route to the control zone," referring to the cell in which the songs were recorded" (Ibid., p. 142). The copy I have seen does not include this detail, but the description referenced by Whalen demonstrates the degree to which this endeavour was seen as a "spectacular" in a similar symbolic, if not practical, vein to escapes and other military tactics.

unusual location, along with the varying volumes on the *Closing Sequence* track. The recording uses primarily vocals, guitar and some percussion, possibly from tapping a guitar. The 1981 hunger strike is a key theme, mixed with other key episodes in republican history. The 18-track CD version to which I have listened includes versions of *The Boy from Tamlaghtduff* and *The Time Has Come*, about hunger strikers Francis Hughes and Patsy O'Hara respectively, along with three pieces by Bobby Sands: *Back Home in Derry*, *Sad Song for Susan* and *McIlhatton.*[461] These are interspersed with tracks including *The Foggy Dew*, *Galtee Mountain Boy*, about the Irish War of Independence and Civil War, and *Terrorists or Dreamers*, which appears to be an original composition by Bik McFarlane on the theme of commemorating the patriot dead.[462]

Re-addressing the role of women.

There are also tracks that diverge slightly from these more commonplace republican themes. The poem *Mná na h-Éireann* is introduced with various tributes to republican women, "who have often been the strongest and have endured the most" in the "everyday grind of struggle," implying that endurance was not only valued in prisoners or always intertwined with masculinity.[463] This tribute is emphasised with the invitation to the listener to "consider for a moment how few of our songs reflect [women's] experience," a statement evidenced by much of the material examined in this thesis, and which could also be applied to the loyalist canon.[464]

[461] There is also *Music from the Blocks 2*, the cover of which proclaims "this CD was recorded live in the H-Blocks of Long Kesh," although the better sound quality and the fact that McKeown does not mention it suggests this may not have been the case. *Music from the Blocks 2* also includes a version of *Back Home in Derry*: the performance on *Music from the Blocks* uses the air of *The Wreck of the Edmund Fitzgerald*, as does Christy Moore, but that on the second album does not.
[462] While Sands became the most iconic figure, Brendan 'Bik' McFarlane is another notable star of republican prison music. He appears in various musical references in the sources examined here, many of which emphasise his talent, including a reminder to a prisoner struggling with music that "well, even Bik McFarlane had to start somewhere." ('Easter '93, 2nd of September', H5, p. 1) He continues to perform regularly in Belfast and has various songs, including *Terrorists or Dreamers*, on streaming sites YouTube and Spotify.
[463] *Music from the Blocks*.
[464] Ibid.

Another track, *Hiroshima, Nagasaki, Russian Roulette*, by Jim Page and regularly performed by Christy Moore and his band Moving Hearts, is an anti-war song in a similar vein to some of the popular music to which prisoners listened. This may suggest a hope amongst those involved in the recording that it would find an audience further than immediate republican sympathisers, and contributes to the positioning of republicanism as part of a wider radical, leftist counter-culture. It may have resulted from the clear influence on this album from Moore's repertoire: he wrote *The Boy from Tamlaghtduff*, regularly performs Sands' lyrics and was an active campaigner against the conditions of republicans during the prison protests.

As seen on *Smash Internment*, this alignment of overtly republican music with more internationally-focused pieces had been a fairly common practice in republican identity-construction since the civil rights movement of the 1960s, if not before. Examination of the role of women in the movement has been less visible, suggesting a growing sense in 1991 that this theme warranted specific attention. Whalen examines the 1980s and 1990s republican prisoner publication *An Glór Gafa/The Captive Voice* as one of the key ways in which that group began to exhibit feminist awareness and incorporate the burden placed upon wives and female relatives into the prisoner narrative, through fiction and other writing.[465] The inclusion of *Mná na h-Éireann* on *Music from the Blocks* can be seen as part of a similar process, particularly the narrator's recognition of women who organised around the blanket protest, running Relatives Action Committees, keeping communication lines open during the hunger strikes through visits, and suffering violence on prisoner-related protests on the outside. The poem references the

[465] Whalen, 2007, pp. 141 - 168. More broadly, *An Glór Gafa* represented a considered attempt to explore different facets of republican culture and experience through non-fiction writing, poetry and prose, and connect that exploration to other movements: "One of the aims of An Glór Gafa is to build links: Links between Republican prisoners, especially those held in prisons throughout England and in Europe and the USA; links between prisoners and their families, friends and supporters; and links between our experience of struggle in prison and the many struggles in which people are engaged in Ireland today" (Untitled, *An Glór Gafa*, Winter 1989, No. 2, p. 3). While it was focused on writing, the publication played a similar role to some republican prisoners' use of music: forging and expressing these links and providing a forum for self-expression, identity-development and emotional release.

instruction “every man will stand behind the men behind the wire,” suggesting that, if “every man” is taken to mean “every person” as the song implies, the men now behind the wire had by this point developed an understanding of the impact the song had on the community some twenty years earlier.[466] While the recording repeats various tropes of other republican musical material, especially related to the prison protests, it was also an attempt to reckon with elements of the established narrative from the position of at least a decade’s hindsight.

Vicarious comradeship: bonding and participation by proxy.

Despite these elements of re-evaluation and shifting perspectives, the 1981 hunger strikes and preceding campaigns for political prisoner status are the overarching theme of this recording and its artwork, presented in line with most other republican imagery on that subject. The cover of the copy I have examined has an image clearly recognisable as a blanket protester on the front, and on the back details of the ten hunger strikers: their names, ages and the date of their deaths. This is accompanied by a brief description of the reasons for the protests and the note that “this tape is dedicated to their memory and to the memory of all those who died in the Anti H-Block/Armagh Jail agitation campaign.” The liner notes repeat this information alongside small photos of the ten hunger strikers. As Millar observes, building on McCann, the combination of these modern martyrs with well-established songs is a way through which “the recently deceased is admitted into a ‘Roll of Honour.’”[467] Whalen reports far more detailed liner notes than this copy, which is noteworthy for the greater exposition of the prisoners’ motivation and practical processes that he quotes, and in terms of considering what twists and turns related to production and distribution may have led to these differences.[468]

[466] *Music from the Blocks.*
[467] Millar, *Sounding Dissent*, 2017, p. 195.
[468] Whalen, 2014, p. 143.

Both the first and final track reiterate this focus on the protests. *Closing Sequence* includes a few minutes of discussion between the prisoners involved in the recording which shed further light on both the wider use of music in prison, and of music related to prisoners by the outside movement. McFarlane recalls Sands playing the three of his pieces mentioned above while they were contemporaries on the blanket protest, suggesting playing those songs is a way of maintaining those personal connections. He also highlights how Sands would bang on the doors "to try and get a beat," drawing out the effects of the protesting period's deprivations on musical production, as well as the abilities of prisoners to manipulate their physical environment.[469] This is an example of the use of imagery related to the process of cultural production, rather than solely the product, in the republican narrative of the protests. How Sands made music has become just as demonstrative of republican prisoners' tenacity and endurance as the music itself.

The inclusion of this recollection at the end of an album so charged with the heroism and sacrifice of Sands and his comrades cements the connection between these virtues and his musical commitment and talents for the listener. In a piece on cultural production amongst fellow republicans in the Maze published in the 1996 *Journal of Prisoners on Prison*, Mac Giolla Ghunna writes that "the dominant image is of a blanket clad Bobby Sands scribbling his poems, songs, and stories on a piece of toilet paper in a freezing and filthy cell. But others were similarly engaged in this cultural struggle" far beyond the protests and into "the present phase of the struggle."[470] Prisoners involved in *Music from the Blocks* no doubt knew this: indeed, the very existence of this recording demonstrates Mac Giolla Ghunna's claim. Other prison-based output such as *An Glór Gafa* was experimenting with different and more challenging ideas and

[469] *Music from the Blocks.*
[470] Mac Giolla Ghunna, Míchaél, "Cultural Struggle and a Drama Project," *Journal of Prisoners on Prison*, Vol. 7 No. 1, 1996 - 1997, p. 8.

expressions of republican identity during this time. "Hardened by clandestine warfare's severe demands, locked up together as the putative leaders of an uncompromising armed movement, the men of the H-Blocks, and of the Long Kesh barracks before that, were exceptionally self-aware," Kenney observes of republican prisoners, with reference to the "prison university" and emphasis on education established in the years following the protests.[471]

It is noteworthy, then, that it was still Sands' musical production amid extreme deprivation that prisoners chose to elevate on one of the most detailed and developed cultural artefacts they were able to produce. This is perhaps unsurprising given the trauma and resonance of the prison protests for republican prisoners, and the coinciding of the record with the hunger strikes' tenth anniversary. It may also indicate a self-aware understanding that this was the "dominant image" of republican imprisonment still imprinted upon the minds of the movement and beyond, and around which the most interest and funds could be mobilised. While no doubt reflective of real emotional responses to the protests and loss of the hunger strikers, *Music from the Blocks* is also a notable example of self-conscious myth-making around those events and wider republican culture.

The continued relevance of the blanket protest and hunger-strike era to cultural production in the 1990s is reflected by another prisoner involved in *Closing Sequence*. As well as those who took part in the protests, there is also a more recent addition to the H-Blocks on the recording, described as a "youngster" and "Johnny come lately."[472] This terminology underlines the importance of the protests as key to how republican imprisonment was characterised by this point, conveying a sense that the younger prisoner has missed the action. During the discussion on Sands and his music, this prisoner states that he went to marches and to the hunger strikers'

[471] Kenney, p. 255; 256.
[472] *Music from the Blocks.*

funerals, adding that he feels like he "got to know Bobby through the songs he wrote."[473] This comment clearly demonstrates the role of music in creating, maintaining and reinforcing connections between prisoners and their outside communities and movements. It also suggests that for some republicans, engagement with prisoner-related music was a way of showing their commitment and accessing a form of secondary or transposed legitimacy and comradeship, in lieu of being able to take part in the prison struggle themselves. The younger prisoner cannot reminisce about Sands as personally as the others, but can offer the perspective of engaging with the wider cultural response, which anyone imprisoned at the time could not. He can also share in the songs Sands wrote, a secondary alternative to having known him, suggesting how integral this song-writing was to the image of Sands on the outside and identification with him. Political music's capacity to give audiences and singers a three-minute sense of what they may have done had they had the opportunity became particularly relevant to its endurance following the mid-'90s ceasefires and the peace process, as the cultural elements of paramilitarism began to supercede its violent manifestation in social significance.

Musical reflections on the protests in other prison-based cultural events.

Music from the Blocks is not the only example of music used to embed the protests into 1990s republican prisoner culture. In another piece published in the republican-themed *Journal of Prisoners on Prison*, O'Dowd describes an H-Block performance of the play *The Crime of Castlereagh*, based on poems by Sands, in which music is used to convey and enhance the emotional impact of the blanket protests. "To the strains of 'The Blanket Song,' the prisoner climbed to the top of that stairway, signalling his defiance in the face of the interrogators, and the end of the first scene," O'Dowd reports, before:

[473] Ibid.

> "The tension climaxed when the POWs were dragged out one at a time by the screws using various brutal search procedures. The cell was cleaned and the men were returned individually and badly assaulted, signifying all the horrors of the wing shift and the opportunism of the screws to systematically degrade and beat the prisoners. Yet the comradeship and unity of the blanketmen could not be broken:
>
> And to our door we stood in scores
> To conquer their black fame
> For loud and high we sang our cry,
> 'A Nation Once Again.'
>
> And while singing this song, the three POWs smeared the walls of their cell again. This was no romantic struggle, this was resistance by the only means available and a determination not to be defeated."[474]

This scene is similar to various anecdotes examined in the previous chapter, particularly the antagonistic encounter with "screws" and the reference to *A Nation Once Again*. However, this text does not merely repeat tropes reported by prisoners during that period, but presents them with additional analysis and direction on how they ought to be interpreted from the vantage point of the mid-1990s. "Comradeship," "unity," "resistance" and "determination" was the legacy favoured by the prisoners at this stage, rather than an image of "romantic struggle." While the play was put on in the H-Blocks by republican prisoners, O'Dowd reports that it was staged "as part of Féile an Phobail (the West Belfast Community Festival)," meaning there may have been a form of reciprocal performance, coverage, or input from the community outside as part of Féile events.[475] The fact that this performance was mounted and the way it is presented here indicate a self-aware attempt to incorporate the blanket protest as integral to the republican narrative, and carefully mould how that was done. Specific songs and pieces of music had the emotional and political symbolism to convey the desired legacy, and also functioned as a legitimising thread between contemporary reports of events and subsequent reproductions.

[474] O'Dowd, Paddy, "Festival Drama in the Blocks," *Journal of Prisoners on Prison*, Vol. 7 No. 1, 1996 - 1997, pp. 51 - 53.
[475] Ibid., p. 50.

A similar technique appears in a programme/review of a performance of the play *The 2nd of September,* about the republican hero-martyr Tom Williams, put on for Easter 1993 in H5.[476] There are various musical elements, including references to playing the tin whistle. The most emotive musical interlude is the description that "there was an entrapped silence over the audience as Sid Walsh read aloud the Bobby Sands poem "The Rhythm of Time" to Sean Campbell playing "Boolavogue." The figure of Tom appeared silhouetted in the doorway - that shadow could have been one or all of those comrades we had honoured earlier that day, the noose now placed around his neck a symbol of the enemy's wish to strangle our resistance."[477] This is the timelessness of republican hero-martyrdom conveyed to epic proportions via musical and lyrical links: from 1798, the subject matter of *Boolavogue*, through the Easter 1916 leaders and the campaigns of the mid-twentieth century, up to and including the hunger strike.

Conversely, music in plays could be used to indicate differences in republican history. While in Belfast Prison in 1990, Danny Morrison writes of receiving a letter from Martin Meehan in the Maze describing how a performance of *Executions* "went off with only a minor hitch and at the end Martin B. de Meehan climbed up on the stage and sang *Take It Down From The Mast!* Nine years ago the prisoners were on the blanket protest, denied their own clothes, and stood in cells covered in their own excrement. Now, they are not only wearing their own clothes but costumes which they made themselves, and are staging a play about the IRA and the Civil War."[478] This representation of the ability to stage plays, as well as the message within them, as a sign of republican strength is similar to the portrayal of *Music from the Blocks* and lyrics written during the protest as evidence of daring and endurance. The song referenced is unusual, however, as a

[476] 'Easter '93, 2nd of September', H5.
[477] Ibid., p. 3.
[478] Morrison, Danny, *Then the Walls Came Down*, (Cork: Mercier Press, 1999), pp. 97-98.

rebel song that makes more specific claims of authority than commonplace broad assertions of Irish nationalism. *Take it Down from the Mast* protests the right of those who supported the establishment of the Irish Free State, and by extension partition, to raise the Irish flag and claim to be republicans, accusing them of treachery. This is not a surprising position from PIRA prisoners, but is a more partisan presentation of themselves as the legitimate heirs to the republican movement than is usually asserted in memoirs which, as argued earlier, generally favour the broadest possible audience.

The *2nd of September* programme I have seen was stamped with the name and telephone number of the Sinn Féin Press Centre, suggesting a degree of official distribution or even that the text was written for that purpose. As with the Féile connection described above, this indicates that by the early-to-mid 1990s prison-based culture and its role in cultivating and curating the republican historical narrative was fully understood to have simultaneous significance inside and outside the prison. Engagement with and promotion of prison-related cultural activities was no longer the preserve of more ad hoc local prisoner welfare or relatives' groups, but had been incorporated into broader organisations with a dedicated cultural and wider political remit. This was part of the rise and expansion of Sinn Féin and its electoral and cultural programme that began during the prison protests and the communal organisation around them.[479] As hinted at by the "Johnny come lately" on *Music from the Blocks*, the prison protests were the apex of political and cultural, particularly musical, mobilisation around republican prisoners in the wider community. It is not surprising, therefore, that once freed from the difficulties of smuggling lyrics etched on toilet paper and passing along half-remembered tunes, Sinn Féin and

[479] Of course, not all republican prisoners were aligned with or supportive of Sinn Féin. For example, a number of republican prisoners split from the group in the mid-1980s, establishing the League of Communist Republicans, and there were also various splits on the outside during the conflict. However, Sinn Féin were the largest and most organised political party connected to the prisoners and thus the most active in shaping and distributing political and cultural messages around them.

the closely-associated Féile began to lift protest-related cultural production straight from the H-Blocks and actively promote it, with additional exegesis and pointers from the prisoners themselves.

Whalen suggests that Sands' songs should be seen as part of the power struggle between electoral and armed republicanism which began during the protests and led to the ascendancy of Sinn Féin, writing that: "The protests and hunger strikes in the H Blocks and Armagh Gaol proved to be watershed moments in Republican history on every level, certainly in terms of tactics: the election of prisoners like Sands to Westminster and to the Dáil began a sea-change in Provisional strategy that culminated in Sinn Féin's abandonment of the policy of electoral abstentionism in 1986. But these years also were ones in which Republicans questioned principles as well as tactics, and Sands's H Block songs in some small part participated in the debate over the nature of the Provisionals' self-construal."[480] I agree that the cultural and political impact of the protests as a "watershed" for republicanism cannot be underestimated, and Sands' songs were an integral part of the former. As suggested above, cultural agitation appears to have become a more explicitly valued and prominent strategy in the 1990s, alongside and intertwined with others. I would suggest that this was still a question of tactics rather than principles: as demonstrated in the preceding chapters, republicans have a long-standing tradition of incorporating music, wider cultural production and the hero-martyr-artist into their core identity and tenets. This had been at least implicitly part of republican praxis at local, communal and even domestic level during the earlier years of the conflict. The mobilisation around and emotional impact of the protests elevated music and other cultural aspects as a tactic, but this was an extrapolation of processes which had already been established. Cultural republicanism

[480] 2014, p. 143.

went on to fill a vacuum left by physical force paramilitary activity, and political music in particular remains a torch-bearer for it, rather than actively contributing to its decline.[481]

Walking the wings: Loyalist prisoners and Orange-influenced parades.

Loyalists also used the greater freedom and resources of the new H-Block era to express and develop their political identity through music. While the UVF parades in the Long Kesh compound were more militaristic, later prison parading practices drew a greater inheritance from the Orange Order and related traditions. The Orange Order and similar bodies distanced themselves from loyalist paramilitary activity, but there was an ideological link for loyalist prisoners between their own objectives and the loyal institutions as icons of Ulster Protestant culture. The social factors that influence parading bodies' vehement defence of their right to walk are not dissimilar to some that affected loyalist prisoners: a wish to assert their presence; not be dominated by other sizeable, vocal or powerful groups; and the maintenance or creation of tradition and the communal links it entails.

Unlike the UVF parades and their emphasis on black uniforms and drilling rather than music, prisoners' Orange-influenced parading incorporated brightly-coloured paraphernalia, flutes and drums. The symbolic importance of these parades to loyalist prisoner identity was summarised in a 1988 letter from H3 printed in Scottish publication *The Loyalist:*

> "...At the moment I have been busy making Orange collarettes and an arch for the wing. We have a flute band in the wing so as tomorrow night is the 1st July we are having a parade. We even made an Orange banner so things should look the part tomorrow. (They might lock us up in here but we will never forget what our forefathers achieved at the Boyne or the

[481] See Millar, 2018.

> Somme. The wing is a mass of red, white and blue at the moment with every cell having a Union Jack in its window)."[482]

While participation in flute bands on the outside world did not necessarily indicate paramilitary sympathies, MacDonald suggests that the "blood and thunder" variant in particular were shaped as a key marker of loyalism by the way republican identity was strengthened by the prison protests: "Their edgy, in-your-face assertion of identity was a response to the surge in robust Republicanism that coincided with and followed the H-Block hunger strikes of 1981."[483] This cultural trend, and the need for such an outlet, may have been felt even more acutely by loyalist prisoners.

Long Kesh First Flute: Claiming authority through identity-fusion.

As on the outside, the most significant musical elements of these prison parades were drums and flutes. The Andy Tyrie Interpretive Centre on the Newtownards Road in east Belfast (as of February 2017) holds several drums made by prisoners in the UDA compounds and wings of Long Kesh/ Maze. These range from small, decorative items made as handicrafts, to larger percussive side drums and centrepiece model Lambegs for use on parade. One prison-made Lambeg-style drum is emblazoned with the name "Long Kesh First Flute," suggesting an entire band infrastructure, or the desire to project such an image. The 1990 BBC documentary on the Maze *The Enemy Within* shows preparations for the 12th July in H8, and states that prison authorities let the parade and related practices go ahead on the condition that the regalia is

[482] Letter from H-Block 3, 30th June 1988, *The Loyalist*, No. 6, August 1988 (no page numbers). As with much of the source material I have used, it is possible that these letters were subject to embellishment and editorial influence, rather than simply carrying direct, accurate communication from the prison. Nevertheless, prison parades and flute bands did exist, and the way prisoner-related publications presented them is no less relevant to wider identity construction if that publication shaped the anecdotes.
[483] MacDonald, pp. 231-232.

handed in once proceedings are over.[484] The footage shows the parade was about as close to one on the outside as would be possible, taking place down the corridors and involving drumming, flutes, loud shouts and exclamations, detailed paper uniforms and an instrumental version of *The Sash my Father Wore*.[485] A bannerette and the large Lambeg are emblazoned with 'C Wing Protestant Boys Flute Band.' This name and that of Long Kesh First Flute demonstrate that these parades consolidated and reflected political prisoner identity specifically, and were not simply reflections of paramilitary or wider communal identity imported from outside. These items bonded participants around their experiences and identification with their wing or the prison in general. This amalgamation of "Orange" and paramilitary prisoner insignia allowed prisoners to engage with the former while still maintaining a clear division between themselves and prison staff, who may have been sympathetic to parading institutions.

[484] *The Enemy Within (Inside Long Kesh 1990),* BBC, 45:56.
[485] Ibid., 47:48 onwards.

Long Kesh First Flute drum, Andy Tyrie Interpretive Centre, Belfast (February 2017)

The paraphernalia in the Andy Tyrie collection includes an "Orange arch," of the kind erected in neighbourhoods during parading season, also bearing the name Long Kesh First Flute. The arch was erected over security doors, on cardboard pillars decorated with the UDA and UFF logos, as well as the names of Ulster Young Militants and the LPA, the Loyalist Prisoners Aid association run by the UDA. The arch displays two figures interspersed with the band name, one a musician in band uniform playing the flute, with a partially-obscured Star of David outline behind him apparently containing a Red Hand of Ulster. The second is an all-black image of a figure pointing a gun. This construction thus combines three key influences of UDA/UFF identity: the "Orange" element and its connotations of long-standing defence and protection of Ulster Protestant culture, the right to parade and related domination of space; the musical practices which convey and reinforce those traditions and their power; and their violent, paramilitary manifestation. All three, and particularly their combined effect, are assertions of identity,

authority and legitimacy, through their reflections of historical tradition backed by paramilitary force. This acts as a reminder to anyone who sees the arch, prisoners and staff alike, that the prisoners are strongly connected to power greater than they might numerically suggest in the prison. A similar appropriation of space was achieved through the painting of large paramilitary murals within the prison, by both republicans and loyalists.[486]

Given the segregated nature of the Maze, the majority if not entirety of those who saw this arch, drum and the parades would have been loyalist prisoners, and staff who were likely to be Protestant unionists (or at least not republicans). Prisoners were telling themselves their own story, claiming their status as the true defenders of Protestant Northern Ireland, in contrast to those who locked them up for this defence. The sheer volume of parades meant republican prisoners were aware of and irritated by them, as suggested in the following recollection from republican prisoner Jim McVeigh, against the backdrop of traffic chaos resulting from the Drumcree protest preventing visits to the Maze. "The Unionists are fragmenting further as each day of protests passes. I can hear the sound of flutes and drums floating across from the loyalist Blocks. Is that all they have to be proud of, flute bands and marches? It's a dying culture," McVeigh wrote in his diary, adding "organisations like the Orange Order have fermented [sic] division and stoked the flames of sectarian hatred in this country for decades, too long."[487]

This perspective may reflect bitterness over missing a visit due to parade-related issues on the outside. It also adheres to a republican trope that loyalist culture is less developed or profound, and more sectarian, than their own, hence "all they have to be proud of" is flutes and marches.

[486] See Rolston, 2013.
[487] McKeown, p. 220. Drumcree was a particularly high-profile and polarising stand-off in 1995 and multiple subsequent years over the disputed right of the Orange Order to walk the route from their church service through a predominantly Catholic area to the Orange hall in Portadown, on the Sunday preceding the 12th of July.

The acoustic context of the H-Blocks could easily have converted the sounds of a parade into a jarring cacophony, irrespective of political viewpoint. However, as has been demonstrated, there was no loyalist monopoly on noisy, makeshift musical expression, inside the prison or otherwise. This anecdote is indicative of the work music and other aural transmission could do to communicate the presence and culture of loyalist prisoners to republicans when murals, uniform or other insignia would not have reached them. It demonstrates the high degree of emotional impact possible from even a relatively minor musical encounter: McVeigh describes the music "floating across," suggesting it is not impinging heavily on his environment, yet it appears to spark a significant response.

The model Lambeg or bass drum was made in the prison, unlike side drums and flutes which were brought in. It was made mainly for show: for parades and photographs. The body of the drum was a plastic water or oil canister, on which the drummer would tap. The show element is conveyed in the fact that only one side was decorated, with cardboard and paint, although this also facilitated its sonic function as the plastic could be struck on the open side. The decorated side of the drum bears the UDA insignia and slogan "Quis Separabit," often expressed as "who shall separate us" or "none shall divide us," along with the Long Kesh First Flute name and images of the prison walls. Informal conversations I have had with well-informed sources on UDA prison culture have referenced drums made using gym shorts as skins, and a *Guardian* interview with a former loyalist prisoner mentions the use of "greaseproof paper and waste paper bins."[488] These are clear examples of Goffman's "make-dos" or de Certeau's "everyday tools manipulated by users."[489] Whalen describes the republican prison production of poitín as

[488] 'Memories of the Maze', *The Guardian G2*, 24 July 2000, pp. 2-3, p. 3 col. b.
[489] Goffman, p. 187; De Certeau, p. 21.

an example of de Certeau's everyday resistance, and perhaps this is the loyalist musical equivalent.[490]

Parades could also alleviate boredom. As stated in the letter in *The Loyalist* mentioned above, the prisoner has "been busy" preparing for the event, suggesting it provided a valuable focus in a context beset by a lack of enforced structure. In comparison to the militaristic Spence-era prison regime of the UVF, UDA culture appears to have been almost languorous and even anarchic. One former prison officer describes that

> "the UVF were well disciplined as well, thanks to Gusty Spence. The UDA by and large did what they wanted. They were a collection of individuals more than an army. The UVF actually had military drills and inspections in the compounds. The UDA would laugh and jeer at them, but they [the UDA] were the cowboys."[491]

While these comments refer to the earlier compound period, it is possible that elements of paramilitary culture established during this time persisted in the later years of imprisonment. Even militaristic parading practices were affected by changes in the prison regime and culture in the 1980s. A letter to *The Loyalist* from Compound 21 in November 1986 reported that "there are no military parades inside now, they were eased off because we don't have any new intakes of prisoners. Special Category is being done away with so we're being run down. There are only life prisoners left in the Compound."[492] This suggests an inertia amongst long-term loyalist prisoners, who would have been sentenced pre-March 1976 if they still held Special Category Status, and a lack of motivation for demonstrations of discipline and identity without the momentum of new members or protests over status.

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[490] Whalen, 2007, p. 22. Loyalist prisoners also made poitín (Snodden, Martin, "Culture Behind the Wire," *Journal of Prisoners on Prison*, Vol. 7 No. 2, 1996 - 1997, p. 28).
[491] Crawford, p. 172.
[492] Letter, November 1986, Compound 21, *The Loyalist*, Issue 1, December 1986 (no page numbers).

As well as acting as a marker of power and division between loyalists and prison staff or republicans, band culture was a means for prisoners to negotiate power and identity between themselves. The *Guardian* story reports that on the 12th of July, "each wing on a block would compete to come up with the best band uniforms, mocked up with tape and card, and best drums."[493] While likely good-natured, there were surely issues of pride at stake in these activities. This factor, from outright rivalry to friendly competitiveness, is also seen in band culture on the outside, and may have been an expected, imported part of the parading season for any prisoners who had been involved in flute bands pre-incarceration. This element of competition is a glimpse of the individual emerging through the collective, the usual focus and driver of the political-prisoner project. It also provided a mutually sanctioned outlet through which to let off steam, when more direct confrontation could have had far more significant consequences.

Popular music and social life in the H-Blocks of the 1990s.

Another musical means of letting-off steam, negotiating power dynamics and asserting domination over the prison environment during this period was the use of popular music and associated social life. Popular, mainstream or less political music had similar functions to its use in the Long Kesh compound, from entertainment to appropriation for political purposes. As with earlier periods, access to popular music could lead to disagreements over taste, and its communal use did not necessarily indicate deep solidarity. "Spare a thought for me," wrote Morrison from Belfast Prison in the early 1990s: "There is nothing worse than having to listen to prisoners who hate each other, all uniting and singing in unison to the song presently on the

[493] 'Memories of the Maze', p. 3 col. b.

radio!"[494] As the decades moved on so did the musical trends which prisoners of a younger generation imported with them. In contrast, longer-serving prisoners replicated the popular music of their youth, having been comparatively isolated from new developments. While political music was their greatest totem, the freedom with which politically-motivated prisoners could organise their more recreational musical endeavours demonstrated the degree to which they had wrested domination of the prison from the authorities.

One of the most striking examples of this was the apparent "rave" and associated drug culture that existed particularly amongst the UDA in the Maze in the 1990s. Michael Stone recalls of UDA/UFF leader Johnny Adair's time on remand in the H-Blocks in 1994 that:

> "The minute he moved in, all discipline went out the window. He held weekend rave parties. There were drugs. Adair would pour bags of ecstasy tabs over the wing's pool table and tell prisoners to help themselves. Some UDA remand prisoners freaked out. They weren't interested in the parties and drugs."[495]

As with all memoirs, such anecdotes must not be taken at face value, and may be particularly unreliable in the case of Stone and Adair, between whom relations were highly strained. However, an informal conversation with a source knowledgeable on the UDA suggested to me that raves and related drugs were commonplace in the loyalist sections of the Maze during this

[494] Morrison, p. 90.

[495] Stone, Michael, *None Shall Divide Us*, (London: John Blake Publishing, 2003), p. 256. As well as his drug habits, Stone criticises Adair's apparent lack of musical talent and love of the spotlight, writing that: "he loved the pop group Bros and sang their hit 'When Will I Be Famous' over and over. He hadn't a note in his head - he sounded like a cat stuck in a lift shaft," an example of the ability of popular music's shorthand effect to puncture the myth around an individual (p. 259). The two had been confidantes in prison before a breakdown in the relationship over power struggles within the UDA; an entire chapter of Stone's memoir is dedicated to claims related to how Adair "knew he would never make it as a pop star, so he turned his paramilitary career into the showbiz fix he craved" (Stone, p. 256). Adair's biographers write that, although Adair had at one time been in thrall to Stone, "gradually, however, he came to resent his colleague's fame and saw it as a threat to his own reputation." (Lister, David and Hugh Jordan, *Mad Dog: The Rise and Fall of Johnny Adair and 'C' Company*, (Edinburgh: Mainstream Publishing, 2003), p. 246).

period, to the degree that their effects can be seen in photographs of prisoners. This is also an example of the incorporation of music and related social culture into myth-making, just as republicans did with politically-influenced popular artists. Stone appears to invoke raves and drugs to imply lack of discipline and score points against Adair, whereas other former loyalist prisoners use similar references to suggest a combination of camaraderie with a tough, hard-man edge. In a 2008 documentary, fellow UDA member, H-Block contemporary and former skinhead bandmate of Adair Sam McCrory returns to the now-closed Maze with interviewer Danny Dyer and, following a montage of prison parties, murals, Rangers kits and weight-lifting tells him "this is probably going to sound really fucking strange - some of my happiest moments were in there. Some of my funniest times were in there, there were some good laughs."[496]

McCrory's appearance on this series, entitled *Deadliest Men* and more commonly focused on figures known for ordinary criminal activity, suggests machismo and physical strength or intimidation were key to myth-making around the loyalist prisoner and general paramilitary experience, as well as political claims. In contrast, Adair's biography includes suggestions from his girlfriend during the 1990s that she would bring in sentimental CDs by artists including Celine Dion: "I had him listening to all these love songs… I had him tamed and that's why they called him Tame Cat."[497] While it is unclear whether Adair would agree with that representation, it contributes to a more well-rounded impression for the reader of a figure commonly associated

[496] Sam McCrory, *Danny Dyer's Deadliest Men*, Bravo, 2008. 31: 37.
[497] Lister and Jordan, p. 244. 'Tame Cat' is presumably a play on Adair's moniker 'Mad Dog.' As flippant as they may be, the references to being "tame" in this anecdote reflect a more complex loyalist masculinity than can be suggested by the tough appearance and posturing of Adair, McCrory and their contemporaries. McCrory was gay which, at least in the literature I have seen, does not seem to have undermined his macho image or paramilitary standing. On the other hand, homosexuality could be used as an insult against even heterosexual political opponents, such as a spoof advert in a loyalist publication for a play entitled "My Life as a Homosexual by Gerry Adams" ('Imeachtaí', *An Phobcrapt Murderers News*, 1988/1989, no page numbers). It may have been that this was seen as irrelevant regarding McCrory due to his otherwise exemplary credentials, but would have been a sign of weakness in someone against whom the movement was negatively disposed.

with a tough, violent image. If accurate, it demonstrates the capacity for both facets to co-exist, and be drawn out by different types of musical expression.

In terms of later, post-conflict perspectives, McCrory's representation of life in the loyalist wings may be an attempt to counter the dominant narrative of the prison as the political and cultural domain of republicans. Republicans also highlight the camaraderie and enjoyable aspects of social life during their prison experience in memoirs and recollections: the early-to-mid 1970s "cages" period, before the far more distressing protests and their aftermath, seems to hold a similar nostalgia for former inmates as the sentiments expressed by McCrory for the UDA wings of the 1990s. It is not surprising, therefore, that loyalists had similar bonding experiences and continue to reflect on them. I have not come across references to drugs in the republican areas of Long Kesh/ Maze. This does not mean they were not present, but may suggest a different attitude to including them in the prison narrative. In that regard, former UDA prisoners' comparative willingness to discuss their "rave culture" could be interpreted as another effort to mark themselves and their imprisonment mythology as distinct from republicans. Differences in the genres of music incorporated into prisoners' myth-making and recollections may also reflect distinctions in the values they wish to convey and audiences they intend or expect to reach. Sands and Adams reportedly listening to Kris Kristofferson and Neil Young speaks to a certain liberal, folksy counter-cultural and even intellectual tendency across a potentially broad international range.[498] In contrast, the house and techno music associated with

[498] One of the only prisoners I have come across who references classical music is Danny Morrison, in his collection of prison letters from 1990-1992, including an anecdote from February 1990 that "Mahler's last symphony, his Ninth, which he never heard, is on Radio 3 just now. Just over two years ago, when I moved in with my da for a while when I was between houses, I used to sit and listen continuously to this symphony and to 'The Great' by Schubert as I finished *West Belfast*." (Morrison, p. 27). A key architect of Sinn Féin's publicity strategy and credited with coining the "armalite and ballot box" phrase, Morrison was convicted of false imprisonment in May 1991 (Taylor, 1998, pp. 281-2; 'Morrison convicted by court', *Evening Herald*, 8 May 1991, p. 3, cols. e-f). The mention of classical music combined with the writing of his novel *West Belfast* invokes intellectual connotations, giving the impression that he was a different kind of prisoner to those, seemingly the majority, who did not partake in such activities.

raves and ecstasy in the 1990s had a strong presence in Northern Ireland and Glasgow, the areas from which loyalist sympathies were mostly drawn, but was far more niche and underground than many artists referenced by republicans.

Fixed in space and time: Local and generational influences on musical taste.

While these loyalist recollections of imprisonment in the 1990s reflect wider musical trends on the outside, source material from republican prisoners suggests a greater emphasis on more established or older musicians. A programme produced for a Christmas concert by republican prisoners in H-Block 5 in 1992 shows the degree of organisation put into the event, particularly the detailed billing and credits inside.[499] The story "A Christmas Nightmare" attached to the programme also features references to a range of mainstream genres, including a "rap" and the song *Nancy Spain*, popularised by Christy Moore.[500] Along with a ventriloquist act and a segment entitled "Blind Date," there is a performance billed as "The Supremes" starring Meehan and "accompanying dancers Raymond Quigg and Joe Harper," and another feature listed as "Gary Glitter." The two latter acts are presumably musical impressions of the popular artists. Unlike the anecdotes on rave culture in the Maze's loyalist sections in the 1990s, and the contemporaneously up-to-date performance of Queen in Adams' recollection of a 1970s Christmas concert, it is noteworthy that the singer and group referenced at this 1992 event were at their peak in the 1960s and 1970s. While this is clearly a limited source, and could have reflected young prisoners with anachronistic tastes, it may indicate an older make-up to this particular block, or an age-based hierarchy in which the older prisoners held most sway over the concert. Meehan was born in 1945, and imprisoned sporadically in the 1970s and 1980s. Other names on the programme, including McFarlane and Terence 'Cleaky' Clarke, were of a similar

[499] 'Christmas Concert 1992 in H-Block 5.'
[500] Ibid, pp. 2 -3.

generation and had been periodically imprisoned during the same period.[501] Similarly, Morrison recalls a singsong with McFarlane in H7 in 1992 in which they "did numbers by the Eagles, Bread, Simon and Garfunkel, The Beatles, Gordon Lightfoot, Sabi Liffre, Fleetwood Mac and the Everly Brothers," all of which were at the height of their fame in the 1950s, 1960s and 1970s.[502]

It is perhaps unsurprising that these prisoners' preferred popular music coincided with their younger years. This is the case for many people, former prisoners or otherwise: Morrison had been mostly free until 1990 but still appeared to bond with McFarlane through older artists. This nostalgia may be particularly acute, however, for individuals whose adult lives have been punctuated by periodic imprisonment, or put on hold by longer sentences: music associated with their periods of freedom would be particularly symbolic and meaningful, and made all the more so by the difficulty of updating that canon. Many people who are free all their lives hold a special candle for the popular music of their youth and the memories associated with it. School discos and dances, friendships forged over shared musical tastes, first dances or kisses with boyfriends and girlfriends, and innumerable other formative moments become inextricably linked with their musical backdrop. As suggested throughout this piece, politically-motivated prisoners were no different. However, the majority population can continue to develop their musical tastes by keeping up with trends and performances as they wish. They can also add to those significant life experiences associated with music. Long-term and recidivist prisoners, no matter how much *Top of the Pops* they watch or records they request, are comparatively frozen-in-time with regards to their engagement with popular music. Stone recalls of entering the Maze in the late 1980s that "during the early weeks it was like stepping back in time. The guys were

[501] McFarlane was reportedly the Maze's longest-serving prisoner in 1993 ('1,550 obstacles to a solution for Ulster', *The Daily Telegraph*, 21 December 1993, p. 6 col. h.)
[502] Morrison, p. 265.

caught in a fashion timewarp… These were men sentenced in the 1970s and nearly twenty years later they were still stuck in the same era."[503] As well as fashion sense, this very likely extended to music and other cultural trends.

McCrory and Adair, in contrast, were born in the early-to-mid-1960s and imprisoned in the 1990s. The comparatively younger leadership of the UDA/UFF combined with the apparently less-disciplined nature of their wings made the development of the culture described above far more likely. Unlike older prisoners on either side, they had barely experienced music or wider culture, or life in general, without the backdrop of the conflict, which was in full-swing by the time they reached adolescence. The two were in a skinhead band together as teenagers, a racially-charged genre originating in London onto which the Northern Irish cultural divide was superimposed. Skinhead music initially developed from ska, reggae and rocksteady influences associated with London's Jamaican community in the 1960s, but a late-1970s punk-influenced revival of the genre had taken on far-right overtones. While skinheads in Britain were often associated with the National Front, white power and an anti-immigration stance, in Northern Ireland the context of this revival was boiled down to pro or anti-British sentiment. Adair's biographers Lister and Jordan write that "like many other Shankill Protestants, Adair and his friends were swept up by the skinhead scene. As well as shaving their heads, they sniffed 'Evo Stik' glue from plastic bags and listened to Oi! music in a community centre on the lower Shankill estate."[504] The social, group aspect of this description is instructive of the importance of music in the construction of the emotional community and its participants' identities, both internally as a combination of "skinheads" and "Shankill Protestants," and against an external foe, as the following anecdote from the same biography suggests:

[503] Stone, p. 226.
[504] Lister and Jordan, p. 33.

> "Another old Shankill skinhead recalls: 'The Catholic skinheads would have held anti-National Front gigs. Sometimes the rival crowds would have crossed in the town and there was a good old digging match with the taigs. Everybody looked forward to that [...] You have to remember at that time there was coffin after coffin going down the Shankill Road and that's what did it for a lot of these people.'"[505]

While the effects of the conflict on music will be examined in the following chapter, the experiences raised here in relation to McCrory and Adair are relevant to musical culture and social life within the prison in various ways. Firstly, there is likely a strong, albeit perhaps unquantifiable, difference in the experience of music between older prisoners who developed musical and cultural tastes during an adolescence that took place before the beginning of the conflict, and those who grew up later, with even ostensibly unrelated musical genres co-opted by sectarianism and cultural division. While age was a factor in the uptake of rave culture anywhere in the UK, Ireland or elsewhere, this may partly account for its popularity amongst younger loyalist prisoners: this style of music, particularly when accompanied by drug taking, is conducive to escapism and an uplifted mood, effects that may not have been possible with other genres which were so permeated with political significance and traumatic connections.

The other factor hinted at by the above quote is the extreme localism, in this case centred around the Shankill but no doubt replicated regarding republican areas, which had developed through decades of socio-cultural and geographical division and which, due to the strength of communal paramilitary ties, could be reflected in the prison.[506] McCrory tells Dyer that on entering the Maze he found "there was fifty-two people on the two wings and I knew forty of them, and a lot of them were from the Shankill Road, they were my friends."[507] Some of the functions of music

[505] Ibid., pp. 33 - 34.
[506] "In a society with strong sectarian conflicts, and occasional violence, territory plays a major part in defining group identity", Darby comments, which can be seen in relations both between paramilitaries and within them (Darby, p. 151).
[507] *Deadliest Men*, 29:59.

which had been necessary in the earlier years, that of getting to know one another, reinforcing and ordering the collective and demonstrating paramilitary commitment were thus not required, as social life established on the outside could be imported almost wholesale into the H-Blocks.

Political amalgamation and appropriation.

Alongside popular trends and artists, prisoners' use of music continued to incorporate political themes during this period. Some of this musical expression replicated long-standing connections, songs and themes, such as the loyalist prisoner singing *Billy McFadzean*, accompanied by acoustic guitar, seen in the 1990 BBC documentary.[508] Others experimented with less traditional genres. This mix of the political and entertainment elements of music appears in the 1992 H5 Christmas concert programme. Popular musical tributes and other performances are interspersed with sections entitled "Ian Paisley," presumably an impersonation, "Long Kesh News Team," "Music and Song" and "The Long Kesh Choir," all of which seem likely to have had a political, or political musical element. The copy of the programme I have seen has a note on the back to "Tom and family" from Meehan, the concert's Master of Ceremonies, suggesting it was sent out from the prison to a friend or acquaintance.[509] In this way, concerts and the music performed at them were not only a symbolic means of linking prisoners to the outside world, but could involve, however indirectly, friends, family or other contacts on the outside.

The programme is attached to what appears to be a comic review of the concert by Meehan entitled "A Christmas Nightmare," which parodies the concert preparations and various performers, including references to Meehan and his "faction" cajoling other prisoners into

[508] *The Enemy Within*, 29:32.
[509] Christmas Concert 1992, H5.

performing. The music in this story blends aspects of paramilitary life with other day-to-day observations and entertaining tropes, as seen in a "rap" that opens with the lines "Well my name's Martin and I'm so cool/ I joined the IRA when I left school," and the description of "a specially adapted version of Rudolph the Red Nosed Reindeer, whose first line went "Scanner the brass-necked Provie."[510] It is unclear whether this was written for the programme's recipient or a wider audience, but the contents suggest there was no issue with an irreverent or even mocking account of paramilitary prisoner life, leadership and other individuals. While camaraderie amongst prisoners was hardly unusual, giving it such a prominent role in a text produced by them could indicate broader experimentation or freedom in republican cultural production as it transitioned from the more serious protest phase.[511] The "rap" and Provisional version of *Rudolph the Red-Nosed Reindeer* demonstrate a willingness to play with form as well as content, blurring the usually well-patrolled boundaries of the genre or genres which constitute republican music.

Another example of this appropriation or "lyrical drift," albeit with different intent, is Rolston's claim that the Boomtown Rats' *Rat Trap* became popular amongst the INLA after the organisation assassinated LVF leader Billy "King Rat" Wright in the Maze in December 1997, as a result of his nickname and the song's line "it's a rat trap, Billy, and you've been caught."[512] This more menacing example of musical appropriation is a counterpoint to the sense of increased levity in prison-related music and culture by the 1990s. The fact that a high-profile loyalist leader could have been shot by republicans inside the Maze as late as December 1997

[510] 'Scanner' seemingly being a prisoner's nickname.
[511] Similarly, Adams' *Cage Eleven* and its "sophomoric jokes" were widely published in 1990 (Kenney, p. 191). While the fact he could reach such an audience was related to the rise of Sinn Féin post-1981, it seems unlikely a prominent republican figure would have characterised imprisonment this way during the protesting period.
[512] Rolston, 2001, p. 55; 'Top loyalist shot dead at Maze,' *The Independent on Sunday*, 28 December 1997, p. 1 cols. a-f.

also undermines the concept of "normalisation" in Northern Ireland prisons during this period more generally. There was a decrease in tension following the end of the republican prison protests in 1981, and especially by the beginning of the 1990s. By this time prisoners had consolidated their domination of their space and were essentially free to express and organise themselves musically, socio-culturally and politically however they pleased.[513] This allowed for greater reflection, attention to detail, experimentation and self-assertion through various musical practices, from concerts to recordings, parades to pop music and beyond. However, the divisions, violence and antagonism which characterised the cultural and political struggle inside and outside prison walls remained a constant, albeit more muffled, feature of prison-based musical expression.

The end of the wire: Politically-motivated prisoner culture and releases.

Much of the musical activities and practices described in the preceding three phases of paramilitary imprisonment were undertaken, consciously or unconsciously and in myriad ways, with the aim of developing, consolidating and reaffirming a cohesive and distinct paramilitary prisoner identity and culture. For the most part, this can be defined as loyalist or republican, with UDA, UVF, PIRA, OIRA, INLA, female or male variants or, much more rarely, instances of a cross-community politically-motivated prisoner identity. The nature of this musical production was highly dependent upon the period from which it came, as a result of the socio-cultural forces imported by the prisoners and the nature of the penal regime, its restrictions, privileges and physical conditions. Each stage was also influenced by the preceding phase or

[513] The potential for escapes and other security breaches entailed by the autonomy prisoners had achieved by the late 1990s appeared to be recognised as a worthwhile trade-off for overall co-operation. "You know," stated Maze Governor Michael Mogg in January 1998, "I rely very much on the paramilitaries to be able to run this place." ('No booze, no sex. but interludes of music', *The Guardian*, 9 January 1998, p. 5 col. i.)

phases, in terms of the themes and practices that had been established and could be built upon in a new context.

The 1990s allowed reflection and reevaluation of what it meant to be a republican or loyalist prisoner due to the settling of the dust following the protests and, as the paramilitaries moved towards ceasefire and peace negotiations, the increased focus on prisoner releases. Many older prisoners who had been key to earlier generation of prison culture had been released, were approaching the end of their sentences, or had the relative freedom in which to develop a more considered and analytical perspective. The cohesive and unifying sense of identity fostered through years of musical expression as well as wider cultural production and more direct, violent tactics was integral to the prisoners being seen, understood and involved in the peace process as a distinct group. This perception, and the need for their release, was particularly central to the Sinn Féin negotiating position, reflective of the significance of prisoners in the republican movement.[514] A recognition of paramilitary prisoners as an active, distinct and potent group in the conflict was also suggested by Secretary of State Mo Mowlam's visit to loyalist prisoners opposing peace talks in the Maze in January 1998.[515] A unified and solidarity-based identity was integral to prisoners' ability to withstand the staggered nature of releases, and guard against factionalism and resentment amongst those who left sooner and their comrades still waiting. Describing loyalist prison culture in the mid-1990s, Snodden writes that "this 'Culture' is still alive and well. The remaining prisoners are a strong, cohesive unit. They needed the group strength to survive. [...] Those who are left behind are now anxious to feel the fresh wind of freedom on their faces. In the meantime, they look through the wire to a 20-foot-high concrete wall, behind which are the empty cages, and listen to the echoes on the wind."[516]

[514] Taylor, 1998, pp. 374 - 376.
[515] 'New hope as Maze gamble pays off', *Irish News*, 10 January 1998, p. 1, cols. a-b.
[516] Snodden, p. 29.

Music and the ex-prisoner "badge of honour."

The pride, commitment and motivation conveyed by many of the songs and musical practices examined in these chapters also aided prisoners' transition to "former politically-motivated prisoners," for whom confidence and continued belief in the righteousness of their actions would be a coping mechanism upon release. As suggested in Shirlow and McEvoy's study on the subject, political factors and practices which developed within the prison affected prisoners' adjustment to freedom, for example: "the Republican emphasis upon collective debate and dialogue whilst imprisoned arguably influenced post-release outcomes and abilities in that it encouraged a sense of internal unity and purpose."[517] It seems reasonable to posit, therefore, that musical transmission and reinforcement of "internal unity and purpose" also influenced these outcomes for prisoners who engaged with it. This was particularly the case for republicans, whose songs and traditions are far more established in their contribution to what Shirlow and McEvoy refer to as the republican "badge of honour" for ex-prisoners; loyalist former prisoners, in contrast, continue to experience a comparative lack of social standing and practical support that is mirrored in their less developed musical milieu.[518] In this regard, the effects of music within the prison from internment leading up to the final releases of 2000 had an impact on republicans and loyalists which outlasted the end of mass paramilitary imprisonment in Northern Ireland. This would arguably not have been so profound had it not been matched by, mixed with and mobilised around by prisoner-related musical production in the outside world.

[517] Shirlow and McEvoy, p. 144.
[518] Ibid., pp. 138 - 139.

Chapter Five: Prisons in the Music: Translation and Legacies.

"An important social and cultural element from the world outside the prison cell through which republican prisoners drew moral and political reaffirmation for their beliefs and actions was the popular expression of those actions through song," writes former republican prisoner Laurence McKeown.[519] This musical exchange between prisoners and the outside world was strongest at a local, communal level, reflecting the close ties between prisoners and their respective movements, families and supporters. More mainstream and well-known artists also engaged with the prisoner issue, mostly in relation to a nationalist or republican perspective. This engagement had local implications, contributing to issues of perception and understanding which influenced communal resentment and self-image. As suggested by McKeown, musical representations of prisoners also shaped prisoners' identities within the prison, as their role in the wider struggle was translated back to them.

This chapter will mostly focus on music from the introduction of internment onwards, as the preceding years have been addressed in Chapters One and Two. I will examine how music and sound functioned as and contributed to an emotional and material support system for both prisoners and their families, at myriad levels from making noise to the production of sophisticated recordings and events. Music was a means of agitating, generating support, demonstrating credentials, asserting identity and reinforcing commitment. Most significantly, music could blur the boundaries between these practices, and link a range of different groups, needs and identities around the prisoner issue. In this way, music embedded prisoners into the socio-cultural life and political struggle of the outside world, just as it brought that cultural struggle into the prison and enmeshed it with prison-based political action.

[519] McKeown, 2001, p. xv.

Music in the pre-prison protest 1970s: Emergency responses and communal bonding.

As suggested in Chapter Two, the introduction of internment in August 1971 was a turning point in communal and musical responses to imprisonment. *The Men Behind the Wire* and *Smash Internment* were notable examples of songs and recordings used to organise around prisoners, and of prisoners breaching prison walls through musical expression. These practices were built upon and repeated as the conflict progressed. The early 1970s saw the development of other musical representations of and responses to paramilitary imprisonment which recurred in subsequent years: fundraising events involving music; engagement from more mainstream artists and musical institutions with the issue of prisoners or the conflict; the production of song books and other paraphernalia; and the satirical deployment of music to boost morale and denigrate opponents. These activities and artefacts connected with prisoners and internees to differing degrees, from directly benefiting them through the provision of resources to a much more nebulous rhetorical engagement.

Silence and noise II: Community activism and mobilisation.

Noise is one of the most basic aspects of music's ability to dominate space and simultaneously express and engender emotions. As mentioned previously, women's practice of banging bin lids on the ground developed as a response to internment raids in local communities, in order to alert the neighbourhood and indicate protest. This response became absorbed into prison commemorations of the internment anniversary, and in local mobilisations around the issue.[520] A Sinn Féin leaflet for "anti-internment fortnight" in 1974 stated that "all cumainn in their areas

[520] Adams, 1996, p. 269.

will be organising the now traditional BIN-LID BANGING and WHISTLE BLOWING at 4-00pm on the 9th August, this being proceeded in most areas with bone-fires and vigils."[521] [sic] This practice was useful because almost everyone could access the necessary tools. Even those who could not were accounted for: another Sinn Féin leaflet asked "how can you rattle your bin lid if you haven't got a bin?", advising anyone without one to contact their advice centre, as well as for whistles.[522] Bin-lid use was also widened from its association with internment to other issues such as policing. One leaflet proclaimed "RUC OUT" and "Rattle your bin lids. Blow your whistle. Make a fuss. Keep them out."[523] The noise and symbolism of the bin lids could be mixed with more developed musical forms for maximum agitational effect, as at a "Sinn Féin Spectacular Anti-Internment March" on 9th August 1974, the flyer for which promised "Hooded men… Bin lid slogans… Folk groups… Bands etc… Stand behind the men behind the wire… Join in the march."[524]

This politically-motivated use of noise made with everyday objects has a notable international pedigree, from *cacerolazo* protests in Latin America, involving pots and pans, to the *charivari*, once found in France and other parts of Europe. The latter in particular was an expression of power and subversion against a dominant force through the chaos, assertiveness and disorientation of discordant noise. It was also a way of regulating the community from which the charivari originated, through pressure to join in the collective and subjugation to the hierarchy it revealed.[525] This double-edged function of simultaneous resistance and regulation is prevalent in much of the use of political music in Northern Ireland by both prisoners and their wider

[521]Anti-Internment Fortnight, Sinn Féin, 1974.
[522] Liam McParland Sinn Féin Cumann leaflet/ poster.
[523] 'RUC Out' leaflet.
[524] 'Sinn Fein Spectacular anti-internment march,' 9th August 1974.
[525] See Greer, Alan, "From folklore to revolution: Charivaris and the Lower Canadian rebellion of 1837", in S*ocial History*, 15, 1 (Jan. 1990), 25 - 43. Feldman also draws links between the charivari and the republican bin lid tradition (p. 97). Radford identifies reflections of the intra-community focus of the charivari in interactions and competition between modern loyalist flute bands (pp. 43-44).

communities, from basic noise to complex lyrical narratives. The fact that bin lid banging was described as "now traditional" in 1974, a mere three years after the initial internment raids and a number of years before Adams' prison recollections, demonstrates the speed with which such practices were adopted into the republican canon and promoted as integral to it.

The involvement of Sinn Féin and the direction to contact an advice centre for bin lids and whistles reveals how communal action which appeared spontaneous was also shaped, supported and encouraged by the republican movement. This is an example of the community activism, in particular via advice centres which developed from the Truce Incident Centres of the 1970s, identified by Frampton as integral to the foothold gained by Sinn Féin under Adams' influence and eventual leadership in the early 1980s.[526] There is an element of pressure and an implication that there is no excuse not to take part in such activities. This reflects the coercion, intentional or otherwise, which permeates an ethno-nationalist community so tightly bound to cultural expression, particularly when that cultural expression is as heavily protected and promoted as republican music. As with the charivari, the bin lids were directed just as potently towards the community using them as to the army and other opponents against which they were aimed.

Silence was also used as a protesting tool. Silent protests and vigils were held for figures such as hunger striker Frank Stagg, who died in Wakefield Prison in 1976, or against brutality at detention centres.[527] As with the domination of aural space through bin lids and whistles, mass silence displayed solidarity and communal and political cohesion.[528] Perhaps even more so than

[526] Frampton, p. 28.
[527] Leaflets: 'Silent Torchlight March Tonight,' "Show your disgust at the British Government who have murdered Frank Stagg"; 'Silent Protest,' "protest the murder of Brian Maguire in Castlereagh torture center, black flags will be carried."
[528] This effect was also used to indicate stoic suffering at the high-profile funeral of Sands, itself a protest as well as an occasion of mourning: "A crowd of more than 2,000 stood in silence as the coffin, accompanied by a single piper, was taken the short distance" from Sands' home to the church, the *Belfast Telegraph* reported ('IRA guard of honour at funeral', *Belfast Telegraph*, 7 May 1981, p. 4 col. e).

generating noise, maintaining silence demonstrates a high degree of self-control, at both individual and collective level. Such a display evokes endurance and self-sacrifice, as well as suggesting that the broader community can be disciplined and organised around political issues, not only those actively engaged in paramilitarism. A defiant display of "silence" was employed by the traditional Irish music body Comhaltas Ceoltóirí Éireann in its decision to postpone the 1971 Fleadh Cheoil competition and festival in protest at internment, and in doing so "demonstrate our solidarity with our fellow Irishmen in the North at this decisive hour."[529] As well as eliciting cancellations in protest, internment hindered musical events through the communal chaos it caused. A local publication reported that the Ardoyne Fleadh Ceoil began in 1970, but the beginning of internment in 1971 and "the intense trouble and distress of '72 and '73 precluded any attempts at organising a Fleadh in these years," until it restarted in 1975, with planned artists including Luke Kelly of The Dubliners.[530]

Humour, heroism and humiliation.

Demonstrations of noise and silence were means of bonding and directing the emotional community from within, and displaying the strength of that cohesive unit to its opponents. Communities could also be strengthened internally through humour, making light of their own movement, or through mocking and denigrating an enemy. *The Lid of me Granny's Bin*, a 1974 collection of comedic republican songs, is an example of this. The back cover explores the benefit of humour and the accompanying concern of overstepping its limits: "...throughout their troubled times the Irish have retained a sense of humour and still have the ability to laugh at events having first had a good cry at them," [....] "But as they say - "who's laughing at who?" The bravery of seven internees in swimming the icy waters of Belfast Lough to escape from the

[529] Vallely, p. 87.
[530] 'Ardoyne Fleadh Ceoil', *Ardoyne Freedom Fighter*, No. 1, 1975. (no page numbers).

prison ship Maidstone is in no way lessened by the humour in the song "The Magnificent Seven."[531] The need to state this suggests some listeners may construe it as disrespectful, and the blurb is careful to also emphasise the courage the escape represents. Light-hearted treatment of serious events thus did not transgress the fundamental boundaries of respecting one's community and mostly laughing at the expense of the other.

Another piece on the album, *The Helicopter Song*, is also an example of the speed by which songs sprang up around victorious events, not only deaths and tragedies. The song, also known as *The Provie Birdie*, commemorates the escape of three PIRA prisoners from Mountjoy Prison in October 1973. This escape was so suited to a starring-role in republican mythology, and song production such a key part in that process, that the *Irish News* commented a few days later that it "will doubtless find its echo in the nation's balladry in due course," as was proved accurate.[532] The triumph of failure may have been prominent in republican lyrics, but they were clearly comfortable with the rhetoric of straightforward triumph when the opportunity arose. These songs were also an important, if less prevalent, element of the image-construction of the prisoner on the outside. The escapees were wily, brave and resourceful in the manner of more standard "heroes" than "hero-martyrs," providing a confidence boost to the wider communities which sustained them for far longer than the escape's immediate aftermath. Such songs presented the republican prisoner as inspirational and capable, balancing later portrayals of the emaciated blanket man and preventing communal responses from sliding into discouraged pity.

Along with uniting the community through emphasising its heroism, music and musical references could also strengthen communal self-conception through mockery directed at the enemy. A loyalist flyer handed out in factories and offices in the summer of 1972 entitled

[531] *The Lid of me Granny's Bin*.
[532] 'Out by helicopter', *The Irish News*, 2 November 1973, p. 6 cols. a-b.

"Ulster Top Twenty" mocked republicans, the wider nationalist community, politicians and other figures with a spoof music chart featuring *Keep on Running* by "The I.R.A," *Please Release Me* by "The Internees" and *Something's Burning* by "The Ardoyne Singers."[533] Republicans employed the same tactics in local publications, including the regular "Tattler Top 10," five or twenty in the Ballymurphy-focused Sinn Féin bulletin *The Tattler*, which included such hits as Cher's *Gypsies, Tramps and Thieves* by "1st, 2nd, 3rd Paras."[534] This kind of satire catches attention and piques interest in a manner that a standard political leaflet or lecture would not: many people would claim not to be interested in politics but understand and enjoy these references, and pass them on to others. 1972 was the most violent year of the conflict, and any opportunity to lampoon the perpetrators of that violence and their supporters was likely gladly taken. Later loyalist publications used a similar satirical chart format, along with other musical references to mock the other side.[535] *An Phobcrapt Murderers News*, a loyalist spoof of republican newspaper *An Phoblacht/Republican News*, featured event listings that combined loyalist and republican imagery with denigration of the latter, for example ""Downpatrick Red-White-and-Blue Preservation Society featuring Gerry Adams and the band of the Provisional IRA (I Ran Away)."[536]

Puncturing republicanism through musical references was not limited to loyalist literature or local publications. *Private Eye* published a parody ballad about PIRA chief-of-staff Seán Mac Stíofáin, "printed and published by Our Lady's Bleeding Heart Republican League for a United Free Ireland, Neasden."[537] The song is written in 'Oirish' dialect and includes stage directions

[533] 'Ulster Top Twenty.'
[534] 'Tattler Top 10', *The Tattler*, 1972, No. 24, Vol. 2, p. 2. The Parachute Regiment was particularly hated in this area of west Belfast due to the so-called Ballymurphy Massacre of August 1971, in which eleven civilians were killed during the introduction of internment.
[535] For example,'This Month's Northern Ireland Top Ten', *Ulster*, July/August 1985, p. 26.
[536] *An Phobcrapt Murderers News*, 1988/1989, no page numbers.
[537] DEFE 13/1423.

such as "more bombs explode" and "hail marys." [sic] Its construction of Mac Stíofáin as a hero-martyr is somewhat reflective of real examples of this genre, as are the song's references to historical figures including Casement and Pearse. *Private Eye* may have been merely mocking republicanism as it does myriad targets, but it is possible this parody reveals a genuine London-based fear of and thus desire to lampoon the IRA. It may reflect a more general, although not unrelated, anti-Irish sentiment, in its use of certain language and references, particularly Catholic imagery that is rarely found in modern republican rhetoric but invokes Irish stereotypes. Mac Stíofáin had been born in England and Gaelicised his name: perhaps *Private Eye* intended to suggest that it was he, in fact, who was deriving authority from a caricatured Irishness, rather than inviting the reader to laugh at that caricature. Either way, it is a testimony to the prevalence and strength of republican musical tropes that they can be employed in this manner, albeit with inaccuracies, and link cultural tropes and stereotypes in the minds of the audience.

Raising funds and awareness: Publications, events and recordings.

The *Private Eye* parody also targeted republican-linked fundraising clubs, campaigns and publications which printed lyrics in the style being lampooned. In London, the most well-established example of the latter was *The Irish Democrat*, the organ of the left-wing Connolly Association, edited by Communist Party member C. Desmond Greaves.[538] The newspaper printed the lyrics to multiple songs in each edition, spanning less political Irish pieces such as *She Moved Through the Fair*, historically-focused songs including *Kelly the Boy From Killane*, and more modern pieces like *The Men Behind the Wire*.[539] In the case of new songs which sprang up locally, it is unclear to what extent printed lyrics would have actually been sung.

[538] Prince, pp. 87-88.
[539] *The Irish Democrat*, March 1971, p. 6; Spring 1972, p. 6; March 1972, p. 6.

Conversely, the *Irish Democrat* printed certain songs that must have been so familiar to its readership they hardly needed a reminder of the lyrics. Nevertheless, this practice reinforced the canon and continuity between newer and more familiar pieces in printing them side-by-side. In Northern Ireland and the Republic, *An Phoblacht/Republican News* also sporadically printed republican lyrics and poems, often in response to current events and issues, in comparison to the more standardised, regular repertoire of the *Irish Democrat*. This reactive position had its difficulties, as *An Phoblacht* noted in February 1974 with the comment that "we can't keep pace with the helicopter songs."[540] In both communities, lyrics and songs were produced and distributed in an ad hoc fashion, handed out in neighbourhoods, workplaces or at events as well as printed in more developed publications.

Alongside newspapers and more DIY publications, song books were published by both republican and loyalist organisations, in some cases with an explicit prisoner-related fundraising purpose. As I have pointed out throughout this thesis, politically-motivated imprisonment is a more established trope in the republican canon. Nevertheless, loyalists produced lyrical responses to the issue, many of which appeared in song books. These books were useful as a means of drawing together the wide-ranging themes of significance to the movement under one roof. They reflected and directed the interests and concerns of their consumers, usually including well-known songs alongside newer or less well-established pieces, denoting the perceived links between them. Along with their own version of *The Men Behind the Wire*, loyalist pieces referring to issues concerning prisoners in the modern conflict included *Loyalist Prisoners*, in *Loyalist Song Book Vol. 2*, which is notably mindful of the effects of imprisonment on families and communities. The lines "Their wives and their children, are suffering the most/ God look to them all, comfort them in their loss" and "Remember their mothers and fathers as

[540] Photo caption, *An Phoblacht*, 1 Feabhra 1974, p. 1 col. c.

well" is unusually comprehensive in scope.[541] This may be a result of the difference between songs produced by prisoners and those originating in the wider community. It is unclear who wrote the songs in this publication but it was printed outside prison, and the narrative is not from a prisoner's perspective. It appears to have been intended for circulation in the community: this audience may have appreciated recognition of their own role and difficulties.

As the conflict developed, prisoner-related concerns expressed in song books also moved on. A publication entitled *The Loyalist Song Book 1690-1990: Tercentenary edition,* featured a specific directive on segregation, *Separation Now!* The song's lyrics transpose the wider loyalist sense of besiegement into the prison context, with the line "and now we're Loyalist prisoners in an H Block far away/ Outnumbered ten to one by the I.R.A."[542] It also includes standard loyalist anti-authority messages, referring to the "rotten old Judge that sent me down." The song also names and threatens various unionist politicians, including Paisley, Molyneaux and McCusker, adding "And tell them that we voted them in and we'll vote them out somehow/ Unless they get us Separation Now." This sentiment asserts power and the feeling that loyalist groups are the real representatives and defenders of the people, to whom politicians are beholden. This likely never reached the eyes or ears of Paisley, Molyneaux or McCusker, but was an emboldening statement for local paramilitaries and the communities around them. The book also includes the dedication of *Ulster my Home* to "my friend Jim McDonald, L.P.W.A," that is, the Loyalist Prisoners' Welfare Association, perhaps as an indication of which individuals and organisations the community should really depend upon.

As well as criticising politicians' handling of prisoner issues, song books also transmitted stories of heroism by prisoners, such as Gusty Spence. *The Sprung Volunteer* is a notable example of

[541] *Loyalist Song Book Vol. 2*.
[542] *The Loyalist Song Book 1690-1990: Tercentenary edition.*

loyalist myth-making around a leader's prison exploits. It characterises Spence's activities in the 1960s as bravery against the IRA and emphasises the endurance required by his subsequent imprisonment, and the daring nature of his escape.[543] As with republican songs about escapes, these actions are positive motivation and affirmation for a community more often addressed through reminders of their mistreatment and misfortune.

These lyrics can be seen as attempts to shape cultural values with regard to loyalist prisoners, their leaders, families and support organisations. Other publications were more explicit in directing their audience towards fundraising, as well as general awareness of the prisoner issue. *The Orange Cross* song book, from 1972, states that "many of the contributions to this booklet were made by Loyal Ulstermen serving from three to twenty years imprisonment in the Living Tomb called Crumlin Road Jail," and includes multiple reminders to provide those contributors and their comrades with material aid: "Support the "Orange Cross" and help us to help them;" "Help the "Orange Cross" to provide comforts for loyalist prisoners of war;" and "The 'Orange Cross' - help us to help them. Stalls open each Saturday, Shankill Road - Sandy Row. "Their cause is our cause." "No Surrender.""[544]

This was a concerted way in which local supporters could help prisoners. Stalls in the loyalist hubs of Belfast's Shankill Road and Sandy Row suggest this organisation was embedded in the neighbourhoods from which many prisoners were drawn. These local connections could have contributed to a feeling of the burden of imprisonment shared by the whole community, while simultaneously shaping that community around those most directly affected by imprisonment. *The Orange Cross* was also an established publication and recognisable name, and thus likely

[543] *Orange Loyalist Songs, 1972*, ("Copywright. Red Hand Commando"), no page numbers.
[544] *The Orange Cross Book of Songs Poems and Verse*.

able to reach a comparatively high audience.[545] Song books which printed contributions from prisoners were perhaps even more likely to generate appeal than those which simply outlined their issues. There may also have been an element of greater dignity for prisoners through selling work with their input. This was in a sense commerce as well as charity.

Social spaces: Building (in) the community.

Along with printing lyrics, *The Irish Democrat* and similar publications were integral in lifting prisoner-related music off the page, organising and promoting dances, socials and fundraisers, often specifically for the benefit of prisoners and internees. These spanned more elaborate productions, such as a 'Grand Concert' featuring Peggy Seeger and Ewan MacColl held "in aid of Northern Ireland Internees, their families and Campaign for their Release," and more local versions, including an "Internees dependents' dance" at the Irish Centre in Camden Town.[546] The latter was put on by the Anti-Internment League (AIL), a campaign which made full use of the organisational, promotional and practical benefits of music as a means of garnering support. Anti-Internment League circulars advertised myriad social evenings and dances, usually including Irish music, in the Irish Centre and other areas of North and North-West London, such as Willesden, with a significant diaspora population.[547] Irish music was an established part of London's social fabric, and apolitical socials and dances were a regular occurrence for many in the diaspora, as suggested by the presence of Irish centres, pubs and clubs in various areas. This facilitated the use of similar events and locations to channel support towards internees and

[545] The Orange Cross developed in response to the imprisonment of UVF members at the beginning of the conflict, "replicating the Republican Green Cross" through raising funds and providing prisoners with various items, such as toiletries, before eventually being "subsumed by the LPWA." (Shirlow and McEvoy, p. 62).
[546] *The Irish Democrat*, Spring 1972, p. 8; May 1972, p. 8.
[547] Anti-Internment League, Circular no.13 vol.2, 4/4/73; Report of Committee Meeting May 23rd - June 15th.

prisoners, as the network of possible venues already existed. Although much smaller-scale in terms of both internees and diaspora links, loyalist groups also organised events around the issue in Britain. A 1976 Irish Department of Foreign Affairs document reported that, similar to in Northern Ireland, the UDA in England and Scotland raised funds via drinking clubs and social events and that, while the organisation's representatives claimed the funds went to internees' families, there was some evidence to suggest they were used to procure weapons.[548]

These events were also organised in Northern Ireland. For republicans, a dense social life, including ceilidhs, live music, exhibitions and fundraisers circulated around institutions such as the Felons Club on the Falls Road, one of the most prominent, and certainly most explicit in its purpose, of such locations. Founded in the early 1960s by former republican prisoners, including Gerry Adams Snr., and still a lively community hub at the time of writing, membership is limited to those who have been convicted or interned for politically-motivated crimes. The club's early incarnation was, in the words of Danny Morrison, "poverty personified, but the atmosphere was incredible. There was music, singing, discussions, arguments. Pride," a culture that was protected even as facilities improved.[549] The existence of the Felons and this requisite for membership indicates the prominence and status given to prisoners within republicanism, during their imprisonment and as former prisoners. This is an aid to practical mobilisation via fundraising and protests. Morrison's use of the term "pride" to summarise visiting the club in his youth with an uncle suggests a prison sentence or support of prisoners was a duty, rather than a burden or difficulty inflicted upon those involved with this cultural world. Imprisonment for a politically-motivated offence may have seemed covetable for young men beginning to be

[548] 'Activities of Loyalist Sympathisers in England', 3 March 1976, Department of Foreign Affairs, via NAI on CAIN (2006/131/1432).
[549] 'In the club', *The Guardian*, 16 August 1999, p. 12 col. d.

involved or interested in the republican movement, particularly those with a familial or social connection to this network.

These publications, locations and social events were key to the interaction between various strands of prisoner-related music. Songs about and by prisoners could be played, printed and heard, and related recordings sold. Connections and associations could be formed which benefitted prisoners through funds and wider support, at international level for republicans and more locally for loyalists. Communal literature and events also moved music and related artefacts in and out of the prison. Adverts and reminders for donations of records for prisoners were placed in local publications or leaflets, via the republican Felons Book Resource in Derry, or the LPA-supporting *Over the Wire*. While these donations, financial or otherwise, appealed to the goodness of one's heart, they may also have been useful for the donor's social standing. Certain literature published lists of names and the amount they gave: a page in the *Ulster Loyalist* in 1974 revealed the contributors to the "Loyalist Prisoners Aid Special Appeal," along with their contributions.[550] Some may have felt a pressure to have, and have others see, their name included. Crafts made by prisoners, some of them music-related such as harps, could also be sold or raffled at these events. An AIL circular informing branches of the price-list of internees' crafts reminded them that "Ordering these is a good way to support the internees, and they provide excellent prizes for raffles etc."[551] This was an interconnected, fluid and holistic network which kept music swirling around the prisoner issue from all directions, flowing between myriad groups, events, needs and attempts to address them.

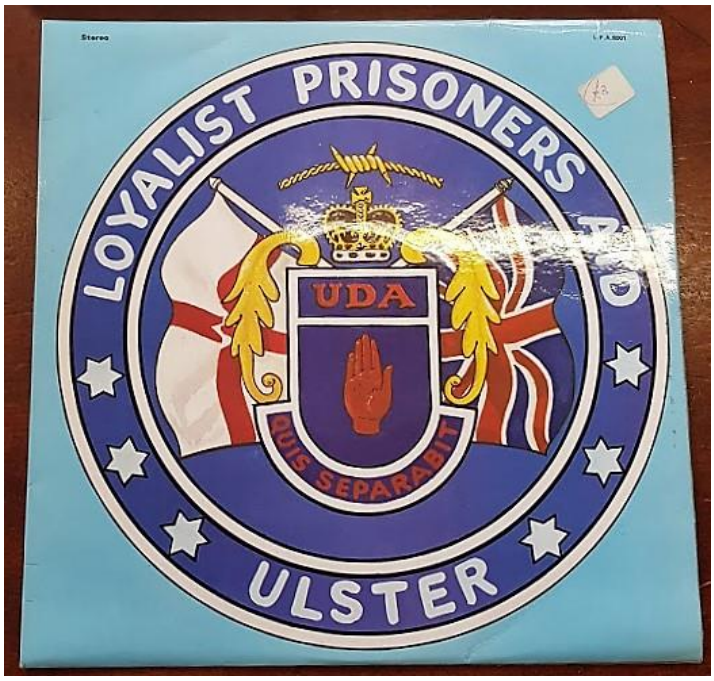
The sale of records was another musical element to fundraising. While only republicans appear to have recorded music inside prison and distributed it outside, both communities produced

[550] 'Loyalist Prisoners Aid Special Appeal - Long Kesh Emergency,' *Ulster Loyalist*, 7 November 1974.
[551] Anti-Internment League Circular - Minutes of General Meeting 19/6/73.

fundraising albums for the benefit of prisoners. The most notable loyalist album, from 1976, was entitled *Loyalist Prisoners Aid.* The LPA shares credit on its self-titled album with the UDA. It lists its performers as "soloists," including prominent UDA members Ken Kerr and Sammy Doyle, and loyalist singer Sylvia Pavis.[552] The record's release was accompanied by promotion of its launch at Belfast's Ulster Hall on 12th April 1976, featuring a "live preview" of its contents and "music by Ulster's leading cabaret band."[553] This event suggests a significant degree of organisation and, as a result of its location in a well-known, central music venue combined with clear UDA involvement, an ability for that group to fundraise in a less localised manner than republicans, at least within Belfast.

The content of *Loyalist Prisoners Aid* was highly paramilitary-focused, suggesting it was aimed mostly at UDA sympathisers. Song such as *The Ballad of Sgt. Lindsay Mooney, Enemies of Ulster* and *We'll Fight in the Bogside* specifically expound the virtues and strength of the UDA, rather than wider loyalism. The cover, taken up entirely by the LPA badge, which features UDA insignia, as well as the credit to that group rather than a looser campaign, also limited the likelihood of bringing in more casual listeners or supporters.

[552] I have not been able to conclusively establish that the names listed are the same Sammy Doyle and Ken Kerr that are known as UDA activists, or the same Sylvia Pavis known as a loyalist singer, but it is not unreasonable to assume they are.
[553] *Ulster,* April Edition, Vol. 1, 1976. Event covered and record advertised in *Ulster*, July edition [no page numbers].



Loyalist Prisoners Aid album, Linen Hall Library (April 2018)

H-Block: Communal responses to the republican protests.

In contrast, republican sympathisers used an outside recording to encourage broad mobilisation around the blanket protesters. *H-Block*, released in 1980, was contributed to by Christy Moore and Donal Lunny, along with the actor Stephen Rea, who would later marry PIRA prison hunger striker Dolours Price. As Ross notes, this was a clear indication that "other voices from outside the traditional republican fold were also beginning to lend their support to the anti-H-Block campaign."[554] Whereas *Loyalist Prisoners Aid* places a clear emphasis on the role of the UDA and LPA in its production, *H-Block* is described as "an album in support of political prisoners rights in Long Kesh and Armagh Women's Gaol." Rea reads two poems, *Bright Star* and *A Retort*, which, the cover states, "were written by prisoners in H Block and were smuggled out to

[554] Ross, p. 83.

the Relatives Action Committee." The brief blurb on Moore's website attributes these poems to Sands.[555] It is unclear whether the album's comparatively vague description was the result of security concerns for prisoners, intended to focus on collective prisoner identity rather than individuals, or because the name Bobby Sands is now far more resonant than in 1980.

H-Block was made under the auspices of the National H-Block/ Armagh Committee, intended as "an artistic portrayal of the prisoner struggle in the H-Block of Long Kesh and Armagh prison," which would be "distributed by Dolphin Discs and [...] available in all record shops," although the copy I have seen was published by Mild Music.[556] Memoranda emphasised that "each Action Group should ensure that the record is available in all your local record shops and assist in the promotion of the LP in your area."[557] The records had a recommended price of £4.[558] As well as the *H-Block* album, the singles *On the Blanket*, by Moore and Lunny's band Moving Hearts, and *God Bless This Land*, by Barleycorn and written by Paddy McGuigan, were also sold by branches, for a potential profit of between 5 and 45p: "Two singles are now available to Action Groups at .75p each," a memo from November 1981 advised, adding "these can be sold in your area from 80p to £1.20."[559]

These were useful resources for generating interest in and awareness of the H-Block campaign, and one of the financial building-blocks which allowed the campaign to run. The group's records show significant peaks and troughs in expenditure and income: a report for the week ending 2 October 1981 reported £156.57 from "sale of literature (books, records, etc.)," contributing to an income of £991.15, with an expenditure of only £214.73.[560] The fortnight

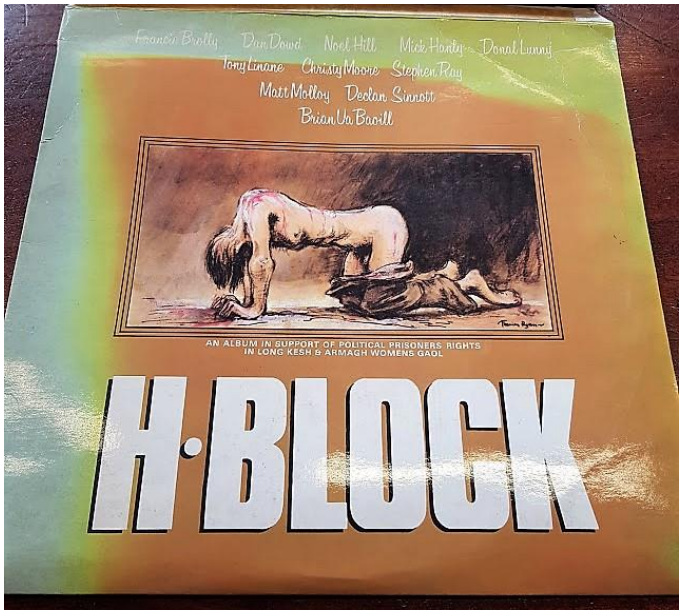
[555] https://www.christymoore.com/discography/h-block/ Accessed 06/01/19.
[556] National H-Block Committee, 5 September 1980.
[557] National H-Block Committee Minutes, 9 Deireadh Fomhair [October] 1980, p. 2.
[558] H-Block/ Armagh Committee, 6 Iuil [July] 1981, p. 3.
[559] National H-Block/ Armagh Committee bulletin, 17 [November] Samhain 1981, p. 2.
[560] National H-Block/ Armagh Committee. 2/10/81. Financial Report Week Ending 2 October 1981.

ending 6 November 1981 saw the same category bring in £74.15, part of a total income of £1,070.33, set against an expenditure of £1,914.17.[561] Campaigns attempting to cover a large geographical area and mostly reliant on volunteers are almost inevitably sporadic and unpredictable, and the sale of these records surely helped. Live music was also part of the campaign's repertoire: as well as the "Spirit of Freedom road show," Christy Moore played a concert at Dublin's Liberty Hall in April 1980 at which £900 was collected on the door.[562] At a more quotidian level, branches were encouraged to stage "H-Block concerts, raffles, pub collections."[563]

Both *H-Block* and *Loyalist Prisoners Aid* featured songs that would be well-known to the community encouraged to buy them, and the track list is indicative of who that community was understood to have been. *H-Block* had Francie Brolly's *H-Block Song*, as well as *Repeal the Union* and *Rights of Man*. Along with this far less paramilitary-focused content compared to the LPA album, there are also differences in the albums' visual imagery. *H-Block* focuses on the prisoner, rather than the organisation from which he or she was drawn. The presence of Moore, Lunny and Rea increases the likelihood of interest from an audience outwith the most committed republicans: their involvement in these campaigns and others denotes a certain stance, but one more widely palatable and ambiguous than a record branded with UDA insignia. The opportunities for casual sympathy within republican grasp meant wider-scale prisoner-related campaigns could benefit from emphasising the prisoners' suffering and inhumane treatment, and avoiding imagery that invoked how they came to be sentenced prisoners. *H-Block'*s launch was raided by Gardaí, implying it was not thought of as a standard album, although as will be

[561] National H-Block/ Armagh Committee. 6/11/81. Financial Report Fortnight Ending 6 November 1981.
[562] Minutes of National Smash H-Block Committee Meeting held on 12th April, 1980, p. 3.
[563] National H-Block/ Armagh Committee to All Action Groups, re: Finance. 9 Feabhra [February] 1981.

discussed in relation to censorship, this suggestion of subversion may have increased its appeal in some quarters.[564]



H-Block album, Linen Hall Library (April 2018)

The H-Block Song was arguably the most prominent piece written on the outside in response to the blanket protest. Written by Francie Brolly, who would later become a Sinn Féin MLA, the second verse in particular crystallised the motivations behind the prison protest: the refusal to wear uniform, acquiesce or allow the government to criminalise the republican struggle. The song's lyrics appeared on various murals around Northern Ireland, including on a large painting of Bobby Sands on the Falls Road. McKeown et al's collection of reflections on the prison protests, *Nor Meekly Serve my Time*, takes its name from the song, underlining the centrality of this refusal to give in to imprisonment to the republican ethos. Lines from the song also

[564] Ross, p. 83.

appeared on some death notices for the 1981 hunger strikers.[565] *The H-Block Song* was played by a piper at the funerals of hunger strikers including Sands and Kieran Doherty, bringing its impact from the textual or verbal to the musical.[566]

Flags, pipe bands and football chants: The musical periphery.

While the above albums were the most clearly focused on prisoner fundraising, they fitted into a wider republican and loyalist recording industry. Both sides had a canon of political music sold for entertainment, meaning that recordings specifically intended for raising money had an audience and genre into which they could be slotted. Labels such as Outlet and Emerald released a range of albums of loyalist and republican rebel songs, flute and drum bands, 12th of July-themed recordings and politically-influenced traditional Irish music. Many who bought these records would likely balk at the idea of giving money to paramilitaries and their prisoners. Nevertheless, this musical periphery went some way to normalise the existence of records intended directly for that purpose.

The differences in approach suggested by *H-Block* and *Loyalist Prisoners Aid* carries across these genres. Republican collections are generally listed as rebel songs, with titles including *Ireland's Fight for Freedom*, *Irish Songs of Freedom, 18 Irish Rebel Songs,* featuring imagery such as guns, the tricolour and the starry plough, but stopping short at overt, unequivocally paramilitary emblems. The most explicitly republican paramilitary album I have come across is *Guns and Songs of the IRA Vol. 1*, from 1972, the cover of which features an array of armoury. Even this album, while no doubt received with renewed relevance in 1972, is ostensibly focused

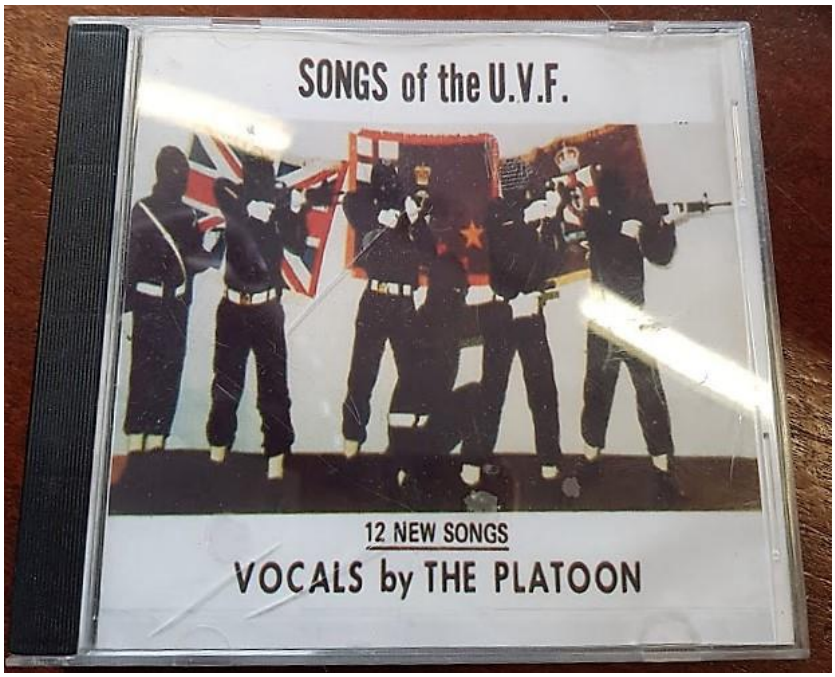
[565] Notice for Kevin Lynch from Dungiven Relatives Action Committee, *The Irish News*, 3 August 1981, p. 7 col. c; Notice for Kevin Lynch and Kieran Doherty from The New Lodge Hunger Strike Committee, *The Irish News*, 4 August 1981, p. 7 col. e.
[566] Beresford, p. 137; 378.

on the "old" IRA, with songs spanning 1798 to the War of Independence. Loyalist albums include a strong flute band subgenre, along with collections of songs similar to the republican albums: *Songs of the Ulster Protestant, Marching on the 12th, Orange and Blue, 14 Loyalist Songs,* with imagery including the red hand, the union jack, and photos of marching bands and Orange regalia.[567]

There are various explicitly paramilitary-associated recordings in the loyalist canon, possibly reflecting a focus on a narrower audience. Loyalists appear to lack a well-established and comprehensive equivalent to the republican rebel genre and its imagery, which is simultaneously highly political but mostly untethered from partisan affiliation within republicanism (or can be presented as such). The UVF also produced recordings, despite not benefitting from the legality afforded to the UDA pre-1992. One UVF recording from 1975, *For God and Ulster*, features a number of prisoner-related songs, including *The Imprisoned Volunteers* and *Behind the Wire*, as well as a reminder on the cover that "some have made the supreme sacrifice, some are locked up, behind bars, all over Great Britain."[568] Another, *Songs of the U.V.F* featuring vocals by The Platoon, includes *Ulster Girl*, written by a loyalist prisoner in Crumlin Road. The cover of this album features six men in full UVF uniform, including balaclavas, and pointing guns. Records, and where to purchase them, were advertised in paramilitary-related publications such as *Combat*, the 'Journal of the Ulster Volunteers.'[569] UDA publication *Ulster* carried adverts for records, as well as charts of "best-sellers," including prisoner-related recordings, flute band collections and pieces associated with Rangers.[570] This suggests those elements were thought of as part of a relatively cohesive market with a shared audience. One of these prisoner-related

[567] The Northern Ireland Political Collection of the Linen Hall Library, Belfast, holds a wide range of both republican and loyalist politically-influenced recordings.
[568] *Ulster Volunteer Force - For God and Ulster*.
[569] 'U.V.F. Records', *Combat*, Vol. 4 Issue 31, c. 1982, p. 2 col. c.
[570] 'Ulster's Top Ten', *Ulster*, December 1986, p. 23, cols. b-c.; 'Best Sellers in Sept,' *Ulster*, October 1986, p. 8, col.a.

albums, *Burning Bush*, is described as "a collection of hymns in aid of all Loyalist prisoners, whichever organisation they belong to," an unusually overtly religious, and pan-loyalist, musical response to the issue.[571]



Songs of the UVF CD, Linen Hall Library (April 2018)

Other periphery groups produced recordings which contributed to the musical milieu around the paramilitaries and their prisoners. Republican-inflected civil rights albums, by bands including the *Men of No Property* (later the *People of No Property*), were adept at drawing links between this movement and international struggles, through the inclusion of songs such as *We Shall Overcome* or liner notes and accompanying literature advertising records concerned with Vietnam, Chile and China. This brought those albums to the attention of anyone who bought records such as *This is Free Belfast! Irish Rebel Songs of the Six Counties*, and vice versa, potentially increasing exposure to the relevant issues and forging links between them. Both

[571] 'New Releases', *Ulster*, October 1986, p. 8 cols. a-b.

Celtic and Rangers football clubs maintain a robust, if mostly unofficial, culture of republican and loyalist rebel songs respectively, with a range of recordings available and live singing traditions at matches, supporters' clubs and pubs with a link to either team.[572] Celtic anthem *The Fields of Athenry* is a notable example of the forging of political links via practices that develop around songs, rather than the song itself. The original lyrics have a broadly Irish nationalist theme, lamenting the imprisonment and then transportation to Australia of a young man for stealing food during the Irish Famine. However, its rebel song status is much more closely related to the tendency of fans to add call-and-response style cries of "Sinn Féin!" and "IRA!" at particular points in the chorus, which persists to this day.

These factors constructed a wide network of entry points into republican or loyalist culture, which could have led to emotional or practical support for prisoners. This musical periphery entrenched these political affiliations as a normal, regular cultural feature for a select but by no means small group. Recordings are particularly conducive to this normalisation: unlike a live performance, they can be played almost anytime, anywhere. Distinct from reading lyrics in a

[572] Central Scotland, particularly Glasgow, has its own sectarian culture, related to but distinct from that of Northern Ireland, and mainly focused around Celtic and Rangers. Music is key in expressing and maintaining this divide. Certain loyalist song books referenced here include Rangers-related songs, such as *Rangers Canny Sign a Catholic*, which includes various racial epithets and notes the club "canny sign a Tim" partially because of the need to "sing the Sash and Derry's Walls/ Every time the Rangers win" *(The Loyalist Song Book 1690-1990: Tercentenary edition*, p. 2). *Billy Boys*, discussed in Chapter One, is also associated with the team, and, unlike *The Sash* or *Derry's Walls*, references the Bridgeton area of Glasgow rather than solely locating identity in Northern Ireland. Various songs mentioned in this thesis are closely associated with Celtic, including the hunger strike-related *Roll of Honour*, and others that reference historical imprisonment such as *Grace* and *The Fields of Athenry*. There are also annual Orange parades as well as a flute band culture on both sides, creating clearer cultural links and exchange with Northern Ireland in comparison to the rest of Britain. Groups in Scotland constituted around loyalist/Protestant or republican/Catholic identity were shaped by and fed into the Northern Irish context in terms of support for prisoners and the movements more generally, seen in various Scottish publications referenced here such as *The Loyalist, The Red Hand* and *The Irish Prisoner*. Football fans' use of sectarian songs, including some of those in this thesis, is an ongoing issue: a controversial law, the Offensive Behaviour at Football and Threatening Communications (Scotland) Act 2012, was repealed in April 2018, but the themes it attempted to address are far from resolved.

song book or magazine they require little active engagement to be experienced, but can form a barely noticed yet potent backdrop to family or social life.

The repetition of certain songs across a variety of albums and bands enhances the tendency for lyrics and tunes to be picked up and persist in the memory. A recording can also contribute to the standardisation of political and traditional songs, which aids the entrenching of lyrics in the listener's memory. The knowledge that many others are playing, or at least own, the same songs brings the communal into the domestic, private sphere, as can the practice of swapping records, making mix tapes and recording from the radio. The artwork and liner notes often included with a recording can express fixed, concrete and well-developed messages, while the physical nature of an LP, CD or tape means the listener can control and curate the running order, venue and other audience members, unlike a live performance.[573] This combination of static and fluid messaging and power in the hands of performer and audience made physical recordings a rich source in the transmitting and entrenching of political views.

This network of recordings, events, performances and song books around each movement indicates a certain cohesion of diverse forms of expression, but does not mean that there was no dissent or tension related to music within the respective communities. This could be issues with particular performers, such as comments on certain rebel bands in local publication *The Falls Report* in the late 1970s, criticising "the "Professional" groups who entertain in the various pubs and clubs in the area, and their method of presenting their music with racist or sexist jokes in between what is in the main, good music, well played… Many people feel they should not, and

[573] This is strengthened as access to music moves from the physical to the virtual, allowing listeners to curate their own playlists, create their own videos, share their own music with a wide audience, and comment on all the above. The main forum for this in terms of Northern Irish political music is Youtube, although *Loyalist Prisoners Aid* was available on streaming service Spotify until recently, listed under the artist Ulster Defence Association.

indeed don't have to pander to sexism and racism in order to sell their music."[574] This suggests a desire to protect republican cultural expression from blindly accepting any sympathy or promotion that came its way. The republican and nationalist milieu has been adept at simultaneously appealing to different groups and stances. Any movement that attempts to build a broad base runs the risk of overlapping with individuals or communities whose views they do not fully share or wish to endorse, potentially to the detriment of the original core.

Concerns could also be raised about what the benefit of increased cultural commitment and awareness really was. "What sort of loyalist are you?", asked *The Red Hand,* the publication of the Scottish LPWA: "Are you a Friday night loyalist, all Bluenoses together singing the songs of past glories and victories, but no mention of the fight that is taking place today… Singing and dancing never won any war."[575] This may be primarily an exercise in reverse psychology, as the text goes on to encourage joining the LPWA in order to rectify being the "sort of loyalist" described. The linking of social life and songs with practical fundraising and support was encouraged on both sides in various ways, as demonstrated throughout this chapter. Nevertheless, the statement "singing and dancing never won any war," while perhaps obvious, is unusually explicit in questioning the value of cultural identity and sympathy without the direct action, or material support for those actors, to back it up.

[574] 'Did ya' hear the one about?', *The Falls Report,* Vol. 1, No. 17, p. 13 col. b.
[575] 'What sort of loyalist are you?', *The Red Hand,* No. 2, November/December, 1989. "Bluenoses" refers to Rangers fans.

"And you dare to call me a terrorist:" The hunger strikers and construction of the hero-martyr in song.[576]

The republican H-Block protests had a clear impact on the wider community and, as demonstrated above, elicited various musical responses. The 1981 hunger strike was the apex of these protests, and it is this element of the 1976-81 period which is most represented in the republican canon. As suggested previously, many republican songs incorporate the "hero-martyr" tradition, in which prisoners are often represented. It is not surprising, therefore, that this genre reached its apotheosis surrounding the hunger strike, in which the symbolism of the prisoner's sacrifice collided with their perceived killing at the hands of the state.

As seen with *Kevin Barry*, *Tom Williams* and songs which reference the 1916 leaders, the imagery of a volunteer held and executed by the British state is perennially powerful. For republicans, it is the most clear and unequivocal representation of their struggle as it is possible to construe: right versus wrong, good versus evil, state power versus the plucky underdog, the oppressor versus the oppressed. The fact that the wrong side is victorious only underlines the real moral righteousness of the victim. The executions of the 1916 leaders, Barry and Williams, internment, the refusal to bend to the protesting prisoners' demands to the point of allowing them to die, and the myriad other injustices laid at the door of the British state are entirely compatible with republicans' view of it. However, those actions must be depicted as outrageous, shocking and unexpected, rather than grimly predictable, as the latter would breed resignation and inaction.

[576] *Joe McDonnell*, The Wolfe Tones.

Bridging the ordinary and extraordinary.

One way to reconcile these somewhat dissonant expectations of the state is to emphasise the personhood of its victim, through their name and real or romanticised biographical details, in contrast to the faceless, soulless state, prison system and security forces. Some of the more quotidian aspects of hero-martyr song lyrics contribute to this effect, through references to family life and hometowns. The first line of *Joe McDonnell*, "My name is Joe McDonnell, from Belfast town I came," establishes a normal man from a normal background, as do subsequent references to childhood and marriage.[577] *Farewell to Bellaghy,* about Thomas McElwee and also referencing his cousin Francis Hughes, uses a similar location-based anchoring technique, as does Christy Moore's ode to Francis Hughes, *The Boy from Tamlaghtduff. Roll of Honour,* which deals with the deaths of all ten hunger strikers, situates them through references to their respective hometowns and counties. Of course, these lyrical devices will be particularly meaningful to listeners from or particularly familiar with Belfast, Bellaghy or Tamlaghtduff. However, the impact is also universal: almost everyone can identify with having and potentially missing a hometown, nostalgia for childhood and the formative experiences of meeting or looking for a partner.

In one sense, these more banal attributes are the opposite of those Boyle outlines as constructing the hero-martyr figure, the extraordinary qualities such characters, and the abstract "rebellious gael" embody: endurance, courage, intellectual, artistic and moral qualities, and loyalty.[578] However, this normality is integral to the emotional effect. The hero-martyrs are simultaneously extraordinary and ordinary, both the boy next door and a timeless, almost celestial inspiration. The lyrics of *Joe McDonnell,* for example, highlight the pain of remembering the city he "will

[577] Ibid.
[578] Boyle, p. 190.

never see again" from "inside a prison gate."[579] The song's first person narrative is more engaging than a third-person litany of the protagonist's various strengths and deeds, and focuses the listener on this deprivation irrespective of their own experiences. It has been suggested to me in informal conversation that Joe McDonnell would not have particularly liked the song, perhaps finding it trite or unrepresentative. No matter, as the audience is not being asked to identify with Joe McDonnell the man but rather *Joe McDonnell* the myth. With this identification established in the first verse, the listener is thus even further moved by the chorus, and lines such as "and you dare to call me a terrorist/ While you look down your gun."[580] As with most of the songs in this thesis, there is a significant preaching-to-the-choir element to these lyrics: most people in an environment where this song would be heard will already be sympathetic to the hunger strikers, their demands and wider anti-British sentiment. Nevertheless, such views need to be reinforced, and constituted and expressed emotionally as well as rationally. The move from narrower, personal identification to wider political points in the lyrics of *Joe McDonnell* effectively marries the two.

As Boyle notes, the artistic and intellectual skills of the hero-martyr are part of his strength.[581] This is achieved through songs such as *The People's Own MP,* written by Bruce Scott and performed by Christy Moore. The song concludes with the importance of paying respects to Sands with "ballot box and armalite with music and with song," suggesting these are equal parts of the republican tradition, and of his character as its embodiment.[582] It also takes place through the way in which music and artistic endeavours are discussed in relation to republican prisoners. *The People's Own MP* refers to Sands' poems "The Rhythm of Time, The Weeping Wind and

[579] The Wolfe Tones.
[580] Ibid.
[581] Boyle, p. 190
[582] Lyrics by Bruce Scott. Moore, p. 283.

The Sleeping Rose."[583] Moore underlines this appreciation with his own recordings of *Back Home in Derry* and *McIlhatton,* further consolidating the image of Sands as poet and lyricist.

This is enhanced by the inclusion of Sands' poetry and lyrical work in community events and commemorations, and in general descriptions of his character. A tenth anniversary commemoration of the hunger strikes and march in Belfast featured "folk music, readings from writing of Bobby Sands."[584] A 1985 leaflet produced by the Bobby Sands Memorial Committee states: "Bobby Sands was an immensely talented person. He wrote short stories, poems and songs in his prison cell."[585] Memorabilia such as 'Bobby Sands "Rhythm of Time" posters,' ($1.00), available in January 1987 by mail order from the New York-based *Saoirse na hEireann* pamphlet alongside '45 r.p.m records - "Bobby Sands from Belfast" / "Irish Freedom Fighters" by Irish Brigade - $2.00" as well as '"England get out of Ireland" badges,' enshrines this connection between the significance of Sands to the republican movement and his poetic and lyrical output.[586]

Sands occupies a personal place in the republican pantheon, particularly that associated with the most recent conflict, above and beyond any other figure. This is in no small part due to the nature of his death. The state's apparent reneging of its pastoral role regarding the execution of prisoners seen in the songs above is even more shocking in terms of fatal prison hunger strikes. An individual's taking of their own life is always unfathomable and intolerable to those around them, but the protracted, day-by-day suffering of Sands and those who followed him was

[583] Ibid.
[584] 'Annual Hunger Strike Commemoration.' 5th May [1991]
[585] 'Bobby Sands Memorial Committee.'
[586] *Saoirse na hEireann* magazine/ leaflet, vol. 3, no. 1, January 1987.

particularly excruciating. Catholic teaching on suicide and the resultant tension between some clergy and parishioners only complicated this matter further.[587] Of course, the hunger strikers' supporters did not consider these actions suicide, but rather murder by the state, who could have saved ten men were it not so stubborn as to prefer a potentially unlimited number of deaths over the granting of relatively simple rights. Nevertheless, many dedicated followers may have been troubled by this extinguishing of life and the pain and suffering it entailed, even if committed to it as a necessary act.

Sands symbolises these emotional factors most strongly as he was the first hunger striker of the 1981 campaign. His election as a Member of Parliament for the Fermanagh and South Tyrone constituency in April 1981 only strengthened the apparent absurdity that the government would to allow the death of, in some sense, a colleague when they could prevent it. This added disregard for the duty of care and its implications for the moral stance of the British government is hinted at in the title of *The People's Own MP*, and was a feature of international news coverage.[588] While Thatcher and her cabinet evidently had no conception of Sands as a political associate on a par with themselves, this development was sufficiently embarrassing that the law was subsequently changed to disqualify long-term prisoners from standing for Parliament.[589]

Each death which followed Sands' made it increasingly clear that republicans could field as many willing participants as they liked, and the state would allow them to perish. Sands was thus the figure around whom the uncertainty, stress, hope and anger of not knowing for sure whether he would die was strongest and most fraught, branding his image and these emotions

[587] See O'Malley for a detailed discussion of the Catholic church's reaction to the hunger strike over the suicide question.
[588] 'El IRA, dispuesto a capitalizar políticamente la muerte inminente del diputado Bobby Sands,' *El País*, 3 May 1981, p. 3 cols. a-e. ['IRA ready to capitalise politically on imminent death of MP Bobby Sands.']
[589] Representation of the People Act 1981 c. 34

around it into the communal psyche for decades to come. These factors all contributed to the breadth and persistence of songs surrounding Sands, but another important element is his status as both consumer, generator and theme of music. No other figure in the most recent conflict has committed such a lyric-worthy act of hero-martyrdom, so resonant that it was inevitable that a plethora of songs would address it, and also composed their own work, capable of sitting alongside the pieces by others. His interest in popular and rock music outlined by biographers establishes a relatability and the "just like us" effect that makes the sacrifice even more impressive and inspirational to the reader, features which themselves strengthen interest in the songs both about and by Sands. The persistence of this figure in the communal imagination benefitted the republican prisoners who followed him in terms of sympathy and also pragmatically, as seen in events such as a "Remembering Bobby Sands" benefit in Brixton, featuring various musicians, from which "half of the proceeds [...] will go to Irish political prisoners and their families."[590]

This myth-making was not limited to the contemporaneous campaign around the hunger strikes, or even to the period of conflict. If anything, the passing of time has enhanced the power of the myth over the man. At the time of writing, the Sinn Féin online shop offers three different t-shirts bearing Sands' image. One includes his signature, two emblems combining variations on his name, the tricolour and starry plough flags, and his date of death. Another is a football-style jersey with the slogan 'Remember the hunger strikers' and the text 'Sands 81' on the back, in place of a player's name and shirt number, along with a print of Long Kesh/ Maze prison walls. The third places Sands' image next to that of Che Guevara, with slogans associated with the two

[590] Advertised on 'Irish Political Prisoners in English Jails Public Meeting' flyer, South London Troops Out.

figures respectively, ‘Tiocfaidh Ár Lá’ and ‘Hasta la Victoria Siempre,’ along with a quote attributed to Guevara’s father that “in my son's veins flowed the blood of Irish rebels.”[591]

The preponderance of references to Sands, and the prison protests he represents, in modern Sinn Féin imagery does not only reflect a desire to commemorate and memorialise his actions, although this is likely a genuine factor, but also to derive legitimacy and authority for the movement from them. “The *memory* of the hunger strikes propagated and validated by the Provisional leadership has most decidedly formed part of a conscious strategy, employed as a crucial element in SF’s commemorative practice and contemporary positioning,” Hopkins writes.[592] As argued throughout this thesis, songs encourage communities to remember and also shape what is “remembered,” particularly as the passing of time means the majority of those engaged in commemoration have little or no direct experience of the individual or event. A similar transformation is achieved through memoirs, biographies, and the cultural paraphernalia referenced here. These songs and artefacts create a sense of power around Sands’ image, or indeed that of internees or whichever individual or group is the focus of music and related activity. The real authority, however, is derived by those who control or can harness that musical and cultural production, in this case Sinn Féin and its periphery, far more than by the subject of the music or musical recollection.

[591] https://www.sinnfeinbookshop.com [as of 07/05/18] There has recently been controversy over the use of Sands’ image and legacy between his family and the Bobby Sands Trust, a body connected to figures who have been prominent in Sinn Féin. Although beyond the scope of this thesis, this raises related questions over the authority drawn from that figure by the republican movement following his death. It counters the impression of streamlined and uncontested inheritance from the hunger strikes to modern Sinn Féín which the latter often portrays, including through memorabilia such as that referenced here. (‘’Profiting’ republicans are slammed by Sands’ family’, *Newsletter*, 26 February 2016, p. 9 cols. a-e; ‘Hunger striker's family blasts Sinn Fein for turning commemoration into an 'electioneering stunt', *Belfast Telegraph*, 5 May 2016, p. 10, cols. a-f). See also The Pensive Quill blog for a dissenting view on the Sinn Féin narrative.

[592] Hopkins, 2014, p. 427.

Just as heroism could be constructed through song, song could also be used to attempt to puncture or weaken that image. One of the most targeted loyalist spoof songs is *Bobby's Anthem*, with variations on the line "Do you want a chippy supper, Bobby Sands?" sung to the tune of *She'll be Coming 'Round the Mountain*. The 1981 hunger strikes were the pinnacle of republican emotion, moral arguments and mobilisation, and therefore an obvious target to tear down. *Bobby's Anthem* was joined in this arsenal by jokes along the lines of "What's Bobby Sands' phone number? Nuneaton 8-0-8-0" ["ate nothing, ate nothing."] A cartoon from the period depicted the "H-Block Football Club Non-Eat-On Rovers," with a line-up of skeletons and the score "Non-Eat-On Rovers 10 - Five Demands 0."[593] As seen with some responses in the prison, the more sacred Sands and his comrades became to their supporters, the more empowerment there was to be found in denigrating them.

Fundraising and organisation following the end of the prison protests.

Focused mobilisation: The issue of strip-searching.

Just as prisoners looked to new actions, campaigns and focal points to maintain momentum after the hunger strike, so did organisations on the outside. One of these campaigns was a shift in attention towards female prisoners, particularly around the issue of strip-searching. The treatment of women in this way was the source of much protest from republicans, the clergy and social justice groups, focused on Armagh and Brixton prison.[594] Similar to the foul conditions of

[593] 'H-Block Football Club Non-Eat-On Rovers.'

[594] Anti-strip searching campaigners highlighted the physical and psychological effects of this practice on female prisoners. A 1989 report noted "the distress, humiliation, low self esteem, fear and anger that stay with those of us who have been strip searched," (p. 1) as well as the particularly damaging impact of the issue upon Irish Catholic women, from a culture "where very often even married couples don't undress in front of each other," meaning "strip searching is experienced as especially traumatic and is a tremendous intrusion." (p. 14) [United Campaign Against Strip Searching, *Strip Searching Personal Testimonies: An enquiry into the psychological effects of strip searching* (London: 1998)]

the dirty protest and wastage of the hunger strikers, strip-searching has a visceral impact and appears an affront to human decency. Various lurid and disturbing stories were described in republican literature, and this practice was able to mobilise feeling and sympathy even from those with little interest in the republican cause. Patriarchal and conservative elements of both the republican movement and the wider Catholic communities from which these women came no doubt strengthened disgust at such treatment.

The issue is addressed in Christy Moore's *On the Bridge*, from the perspective of a passer-by at a protest who "did not want to hear."[595] Nevertheless, the protagonist is forced to address that "six women hold a naked woman pinned down on the floor/ Without trial or jury, like a prisoner of war" and "Women are being strip searched in Armagh jail."[596] This imagery relating to being a "prisoner of war" seems to suggest that such a status is undesirable, but also that these women are already being treated as such, implying they therefore deserve full recognition. In framing the issue as one that ordinary people wish to ignore, Moore may be commenting on the comparative lack of attention to the female politically-motivated prisoner experience, or playing on the shame felt by those prisoners when confronted with strip-searching.

Other lyrical representations of strip-searching at Armagh reflect the difficulties in categorising female paramilitary prisoners discussed in Chapter Three. The Irish Brigade song *Dark Roses (Armagh Women)* paints female prisoners as passive victims of the practice and of the British presence in Ireland more generally, whereas a song entitled *The Armagh Women*, by former prisoner and playwright Margaretta D'Arcy, emphasises the women's power and endurance. *Armagh,* by British female-fronted post-punk band Au Pairs, references the dirty protest, lack of sanitary provision or pain relief during childbirth, and the general degradation experienced by

[595] Moore, p. 136.
[596] Ibid.

the female prisoners whilst the UK hypocritically claims to be civilised. These differences reflect the complexity of the issue, and the importance of the singer's background and intended audience to the perspective taken. The Irish Brigade are a stalwart rebel band, and it is therefore not surprising that their imagery relates to established tropes of femininity in Irish nationalism. In contrast, punk lyrics were often intended to shock, even disgust, the listener and reflect and inspire anger and anti-establishment sentiment, responses that strip-searching and the Armagh dirty protest could clearly inspire.

Maintaining the milieu: Socialising and cultural exchange.

Events and fundraising activities also continued around the general issue of prisoner welfare, rather than any specific campaign. Some pubs, like the Victoria Tavern in Holloway, North London, regularly held prisoner-related benefits, making such events an entrenched part of the social calendar for campaigners and sympathisers and creating physical hubs and meeting points for them.[597] Similar to institutions such as the Felons Club, this social aspect also made fundraisers more appealing and less of a chore, integrated into normal social life rather than relying on a sense of duty, and possibly attracted a more dynamic and varied crowd than a rally or lecture. This enjoyment factor, along with the alcohol present, may have also enhanced both emotional fervour and generosity towards the cause.

The relatively well-defined and recognised nature of Irish music meant it could be combined with other movements and their musical styles, to the benefit of both. Events such as a 1987

[597] 'Fuascailt Social. Last Thursday of every month at the Victoria Tavern, Holloway Road' ("All proceeds to prisoner welfare") in Fuascailt Irish Political Prisoners Campaign bulletin/ leaflet, Winter 1997/98.

Irish Prisoners Appeal Fund Raising Social in Brixton, organised with the Joint Turkish Solidarity Campaign and billed as a Ceilidh-Senlik, took advantage of this opportunity for cultural exchange, and the enhanced interest and different audience it may have attracted.[598] Another, at Brixton Town Hall, offered ""Irish, Scottish, Iranian Music and… Special Surprise Guest… Christy Moore."[599] London's vast and varied cultural scene also allowed musical fundraisers to be tailored for specific audiences, or for specific groups of prisoners, such as women only events or benefits for female Irish prisoners in English prisons.[600] The success of the political-traditional Irish music brand and international interest in it facilitated music-based events held abroad to raise support, even in areas that, unlike London and parts of the USA, had no particular Irish diaspora and associated social network. Events in France, for example, in support of H-Block prisoners would advertise the presence of "un groupe de folk irlandais" or "chansons irlandaises" on their publicity material.[601] Lacking such an organised diaspora and well-recognised genre of music, loyalists were not able to mount such events outside of Northern Ireland or Scotland, nor benefit from the sympathy, awareness and practical support they could generate.

Popular music and the conflict.

This discrepancy between loyalist and republican ability to reach out of their local support bases was mirrored in the engagement of popular music with the Northern Irish conflict. The wider history of Troubles-related popular music has been well-documented from various perspectives by writers including Rolston, Pietzonka, Bailie and McLoone. However, the issues it raised,

[598] Ceilidh-Senlik Leaflet - Joint Turkish Solidarity Campaign - Irish Prisoners Appeal Fund Raising Social, Brixton, 20th June 1987.
[599] 'Benefit for the Irish Prisoners,' advertised on Irish Political Prisoners in English Jails Public Meeting flyer, South London Troops Out.
[600] Irish Prisoners Appeal Benefit leaflet (Women Only); Benefit for Irish Women in Prison (Brixton).
[601] 'Forum Irlande' Leaflet, 10 - 11 May 1980; '4 heures pour l'Irlande' Leaflet, 26 May 1981.

including broadcasting bans, security concerns for artists and the differences in representation of the respective movements, warrant brief attention here as these raised issues which contributed to the broader socio-cultural context influencing the production and reception of localised political music.[602] Mainstream musical engagement with the conflict was also linked to the musicians and genres prisoners themselves listened to in prison, as explored in the previous chapters.

This is a rebel song: Early pro-nationalist stances.

The difference in image and wider sympathy regarding republicans and loyalists is clear in mainstream musical engagement with the conflict. Most songs are either explicitly pro-Irish nationalist or at least anti-British, or studiously neutral, advocating peace or expressing bewilderment and grief at the violence and death caused by the conflict. John Lennon's 1972 *The Luck of the Irish* strongly opposes British presence in Ireland, referencing famine, brutality, and division. Lennon is similarly unequivocal in *Sunday Bloody Sunday*, which decries internment as well as the eponymous January 1972 incident. The latter song, with its almost discordant layers of percussion, guitar solos and Yoko Ono's wailing backing vocals is particularly confrontational, whereas *The Luck of the Irish* is more of a sweeping ballad, evoking "traditional" Irish music and the emotional pull that comes with it for an audience thus inclined.

Give Ireland Back to the Irish, Paul McCartney's 1972 single with Wings, is another explicit alliance with Irish nationalism from a figure with a huge international platform. These songs are the most notable examples of clear allegiance with republicanism/ nationalism from mainstream

[602] The distinction I have made between "mainstream" and "directly political" rests on whether an artist's output is produced for mass appeal, and may touch upon various political causes but does so alongside apolitical content, or if its primary focus is political music and the related movement. This may be better understood as a spectrum than a clear divide.

artists, in terms of the strength of the lyrics and the international standing of the singers. In contrast, the most well-known group to incorporate explicitly loyalist sentiment into their work was the far-right, white-supremacist English band Skrewdriver, with songs such as *Smash the IRA.* While this is a move away from the mostly local, even ghettoised nature of pro-loyalist understanding and empathy, it can hardly compare with the advocacy of two former Beatles. The resulting association with other causes propagated by Skrewdriver also likely did more harm than good in terms of overall image and support. In contrast, on his album *Some Time in New York City* (on which both the above pieces appear), Lennon placed the Irish question alongside other struggles such as women's liberation and black rights. Reciprocally, certain republican publications have absorbed Lennon's lyrics as part of their canon and placed them alongside other integral pieces. *Songs of Resistance,* a large compendium published in 2001 spans multiple songs about the 1981 hunger strikers and blanket men, including the *H-Block Song*, earlier figures such as Michael Gaughan and Terence MacSwiney, more traditional and broader-focused rebel songs, and Lennon's *Luck of the Irish* and *Sunday Bloody Sunday*.[603]

The incorporation of pro-Irish nationalist, anti-British sentiment into an alignment with other international liberation movements is one likely reason behind the strength of these statements and the lack of comparable loyalist counterparts. As has been seen, this has been achieved musically in various ways throughout the conflict, from the civil rights movement to the listening habits of prisoners. Another factor, in terms of artist and audience, was that of diaspora. Both Lennon and McCartney were of Irish descent and grew up in Liverpool, where the cultural influence of that immigrant group was, and remains, strong. They likely thus felt a certain connection to Irish nationalism and horror at events such as internment and Bloody Sunday, as did fans from a similar background. "Internment finally awakened John Lennon to

[603] *Songs of Resistance, 1968 - 2001, Fourth Enlarged Edition* (Cló Saoirse - Irish Freedom Press).

the urgency of the situation," Doggett writes, adding: "He also began to educate himself in the history of Ireland, and to find comparisons between the UK involvement there, and the American intervention in Vietnam."[604]

Timing could have been another factor in audience reception of these songs: there was widespread outrage in 1972 following Bloody Sunday and the introduction of internment, and republican violence in mainland Britain was only a fraction of what it would become. Popular response to these records in Britain was likely more sympathetic than it would have been in autumn 1974, for example, when bombs in pubs in Guildford and Birmingham killed more than twenty civilians and injured hundreds.[605] Lennon and McCartney may have wished to outrage, or considered themselves so stratospherically popular that questions of audience reaction did not apply. Nevertheless, if there was any calculation made regarding a potential negative impact to their popularity, conditions were much more favourable in the early 1970s than subsequently.

Neutrality, sympathy and radical chic.

Many later songs by artists outside Northern Ireland that dealt with the conflict were more neutral, focusing on disgust at the devastation it had wrought, and an implied or explicit call for peace. This position is clearly exemplified in the imagery surrounding U2's own *Sunday Bloody Sunday*, from the 1983 album *War*: lead-singer Bono performing the track live, holding a white flag and proclaiming "this is not a rebel song." Another successful song in a similar vein was The Cranberries' 1994 *Zombie*, written in the aftermath of the Warrington bombing. Both pieces are reproachful, suggesting a desire to move forward, out of the shadow of history. It is worth

[604] Doggett, Peter, *There's a Riot Going on: Revolutionaries, Rock Stars and the Rise and Fall of '60s Counter-Culture*, (Edinburgh: Canongate, 2007), pp. 438-439.
[605] 'Bombs kill 4, hurt 40, in Surrey pubs', *The Observer*, 6 October 1974, p. 1 cols. a-d; 'Blasts kill 17, injure 120 in Birmingham', *The Guardian*, 22 November 1974, p. 1 cols. a-f.

noting that both bands are from the Republic of Ireland, and may have felt a personal connection to the conflict on an even stronger level than that of Lennon and McCartney, and perhaps a more urgent need to distance themselves from it.

An uncharitable reading of this phenomenon would posit that, rather than feeling a responsibility to condemn violence to a global audience, these bands, as well as Lennon and McCartney, were attempting to capitalise, artistically and monetarily, on a situation which had little to do with them and which they knew little about. This is a feeling expressed by various Northern Irish musicians in Bailie's authoritative *Trouble Songs*, along with concerns over how these musicians should handle representing the conflict themselves. Bailie reports complaints from civil rights activist Eamon McCann and Terri Hooley, owner of Belfast record label Good Vibrations, that Lennon had spawned an association between the conflict and "radical chic," and quotes Derry-born-and-raised Feargal Sharkey, the lead singer of The Undertones, on his reaction to U2's *Sunday Bloody Sunday*: "It really pissed me off. I was there at the time and I couldn't understand how Bono, sitting in his comfy house in Dublin, could pass comment on what was going on in my mind and in the minds of the other 25,000 people on the march that day when British troops opened fire on us. I always find it extremely arrogant for people who've never lived there and never really experienced it, to start writing songs about it."[606]

What some musicians and activists may read as arrogance or radical chic could also be understood as a useful, albeit superficial, contribution to the process of raising awareness and soliciting broad international support. The building of a mass movement around the anti-H-Block campaign, hunger strikers and Sinn Féin necessitated a vaguely rendered focus on support rather than ideological purity, particularly at its peripheral edges. The intensity and urgency

[606] Bailie, pp. 62; 154.

generated by the hunger strikes placed a far greater emphasis on sympathisers putting money in a bucket or a poster in a window than proving their knowledge of republican dogma and commitment to it. The fact that musical representations of the conflict were either explicitly or implicitly more sympathetic to republicanism contributed to a general milieu in which that movement seemed more legitimate, attractive or even simply familiar, in comparison to the marginalised or entirely overlooked loyalism. The nebulous nature of these mainstream musical connections was arguably a benefit rather than a hindrance in terms of generating republican support. Such references were sufficiently vague and underdeveloped as to allow the movement to be all things to all men: counter-cultural associations with radical liberation campaigns forged via John Lennon, for example, could co-exist with the courting of conservative Irish America. In turn, this wider public platform, and loyalism's lack thereof, reinforced the latter's sense of abandonment and besiegement, along with the insular nature of its own musical expression and identity construction. As Shirlow and McGovern highlight, "for many Protestants the sense that they are denigrated both at home and abroad only furthers the sense of besiegement and promotes a further drive towards illusionary homogeneity."[607]

Punk, escapism and insecurity.

While Northern Irish musicians were unlikely to be accused of inauthenticity, they faced concerns over how they should respond to the violence and upheaval around them. Bands like Belfast's Stiff Little Fingers incorporated it into their work, most famously on their 1979 debut album *Inflammable Material* and particularly the single *Alternative Ulster*, which combined frustrations over the boredom and lack of social life in Belfast, itself a product of the political situation, with wider discontent aimed at the RUC. The cover for *Inflammable Material*,

[607] Shirlow and McGovern, p. 4.

depicting a series of stylised bonfires, also put the conflict front and centre in the group's imagery, as did other songs on the album including *Suspect Device, State of Emergency* and *Barbed Wire Love*. In contrast, Northern Ireland's other breakout band from this period, The Undertones, almost never directly referred to the issue in song, preferring jauntier, light-hearted themes exemplified by their biggest hit *Teenage Kicks*. Van Morrison had left for the USA by the time the violence of the late 1960s began and also rarely alluded to it musically.[608]

There were also security considerations specific to musicians, beyond the limited opportunity and restricted music scene bemoaned by Stiff Little Fingers. Pubs, restaurants and similar venues were subject to paramilitary attacks, and socialising in Belfast's city centre was particularly dangerous.[609] The murder of three members of the Miami Showband by the UVF in 1975 as they attempted to travel back to Dublin after playing in Banbridge also loomed large in the minds of many who performed in Northern Ireland during the conflict years, as Bailie highlights.[610]

These factors and the wider conflict clearly influenced musicians in Northern Ireland, and bands such as The Undertones may have been accused of dodging a responsibility to reflect the reality

[608] Van Morrison made his most striking, albeit indirect, musical reference to the conflict on the 1988 album *Irish Heartbeat*, recorded with the folk outfit The Chieftains. The record is a cross-community statement in itself, in the suggestion that a Protestant from East Belfast is "Irish" in the first place, let alone in a similar, shared manner to a group of predominantly Catholic musicians from Dublin. This is drawn out most prominently on the track *I'll Tell Me Ma*, an Irish traditional classic that in this case is spliced with the tune of *The Sash my Father Wore*. While this is a strong allusion to Northern Irish cultural and social division to any listener who recognises the songs, there is no lyrical statement made nor reference to the second tune on the track listing: as a result, it sounds like regular "folk" in the same vein as the rest of the album to anyone unaware of the significance of this juxtaposition.
[609] The bombing of the Abercorn restaurant in central Belfast on the afternoon of 4 March 1972 was an especially brutal attack on the city's social life and leisure time, killing two and injuring 135 ('Police pin blame on Provos,' *Belfast Telegraph*, 6 March 1972, p. 1 cols. d-g.) Similar plots were also averted, including an INLA plan to bomb a disco in Portadown in 1985 ('Men jailed for disco death plot,' *Belfast Telegraph*, 4 April 1987, p. 5 cols. c-e.)
[610] Bailie, pp. 72 - 73; p. 90.

on the ground and their own opinions of it in their work.[611] Conversely, music can be a form of escapism as much as division, and punk and new-wave in Northern Ireland has been lauded as one of the few social and cultural spaces in which Protestant and Catholic young people could mix and enjoy a shared, non-sectarian identity. As Martin McLoone writes "the darkened and empty city centre provided a meeting place where the overwhelmingly working-class punks could get together outside the sectarian pressures of their home housing estates."[612] The 1979 documentary film *Shellshock Rock*, also highlighted by McLoone, is a powerful depiction of the visceral force of punk music in the face of combined physical upheaval and cultural stasis, as well as representing local bands such as Rudi and Protex who did not reach the fame and longevity of others mentioned here. As with its appeal to working-class youth in Britain and beyond, this punk scene was a common rejection of the status quo, only in a more extreme context. The punk aesthetic emphasised nihilism and the emptiness of standard symbols of identity, which was particularly subversive in the coded world of Northern Ireland and its "ubiquitous political markings" and "dominant ideological binaries," as Martínez describes.[613]

With this shared punk or new-wave identity in mind, as fragile as it may have been, it is no surprise that certain artists steered clear of overtly partisan or provocative lyrics and imagery. Commercialism was a factor, Rolston suggests, a concern that meant few bands "were foolish enough to cut off half a potential audience in advance."[614] Ultimately, however, McLoone argues that this shared scene was simply not a match for the tensions of the conflict, particularly as the prison protests reached their apex and cast punk's nihilistic imagery in a new light: "It did

[611] The Undertones did not hide their views in interviews, but kept their music relatively separate. Two members subsequently formed the more politicised That Petrol Emotion, whose 1987 debut album *Babble* featured extracts from the Prevention of Terrorism Act on its artwork. Rolston describes That Petrol Emotion as "unashamedly pro-republican." (Rolston, 2001; p. 59)
[612] McLoone, p. 35.
[613] Martínez, p. 208.
[614] Rolston, 2001, p. 65

not last, of course. The dirty protests and the republican hunger strikes of 1980–81 raised the sense of the abject beyond that of a mere subcultural style."[615]

When certain punk and new wave artists did take a stand, it was more subtle. The Undertones' *It's Going to Happen* was initially written as a critique of the government's steadfast refusal to give way to the 1981 hunger strikes, but was reworked before recording into an apparently apolitical pop song barely distinct from the rest of the band's output.[616] Similarly, guitarist Damian O'Neill wore an armband during the band's performance of the song on *Top of the Pops* in the immediate aftermath of the death of Bobby Sands, but the camerawork gives a blink-and-you'll-miss-it quality to the visual statement, either by accident or design. The fact that the hunger strikes and Sands' death moved the otherwise generally apolitical Undertones to a partisan, albeit coded and brief, intervention is indicative of the cultural resonance the prison protests achieved. In another high-profile reflection of the protests, The Clash's Joe Strummer appeared in an "H-Block" t-shirt in the video for the band's 1978 single *Tommy Gun*. Strummer adopted this imagery during this period alongside emblems of the Baader-Meinhof group and Brigate Rosse, in a similar broad counter-cultural stance to that of early-1970s Lennon.[617] This apparent support for republican prisoners and other comments supporting the Troops Out Movement earned Strummer a death threat from a loyalist paramilitary group, and, according to a collaborator with the band, he was "put on an assassination list by the UDA."[618]

While it is unclear how serious these threats were, they indicate paramilitaries and the movements around them were aware of and concerned with popular music's engagement with

[615] McLoone, p. 36.
[616] Bailie, p. 152.
[617] As with Lennon's use of republican tropes, Strummer's references, as heartfelt as they may have been, are far more on the radical chic end of the spectrum than those of the Londonderry-based Undertones.
[618] Salewicz, Chris, *Redemption Song: The Definitive Biography of Joe Strummer*, (London: HarperCollins, 2012), pp. 254-255)

the conflict, recognising it as an actor in the related cultural struggle. Republicans also kept an eye on mainstream musicians' references to their movement, and incorporated these stances into wider judgements on those musicians' output. A 1984 review of The Smiths' album *Hatful of Hollow* in advance of the group's Irish tour in *An Phoblacht/ Republican News* opens with a recent quote from lead singer Morrissey, opining that "the sorrow of the Brighton bombing is that she (Thatcher) escaped unscathed. The sorrow is that she's still alive. I think that for once the IRA were accurate in selecting their targets."[619] Despite this critical caveat, the emphasis on this statement in the overall favourable review suggests Morrissey's sympathies have contributed to a stamp of legitimacy handed out by the republican organ.[620] Conversely, engagement with popular music could pose a security risk to the paramilitaries, and even paramilitary prisoners, as when Johnny Adair was shot at a UB40 concert whilst on parole from the Maze in 1999.[621] Mirroring the musical amalgamation which took place within prison, these incidents indicate a blurring of boundaries between political and mainstream music and engagement with it, with implications for musicians, fans and paramilitary actors alike.

Broadcasting bans and censorship.

Broadcasting restrictions were a more formal potential difficulty which faced artists engaging with the conflict. *Give Ireland Back to the Irish* was banned by the BBC and Independent Television Authority, and referred to as "a record by the group Wings" on Radio 1, to prevent

[619] 'Spit in your eye', *An Phoblacht/Republican News,* 22 November 1984, p. 15 cols. a-e.
[620] Perceived diaspora connections also seemed to facilitate this somewhat unlikely warmth: "Their names are Morrissey (who used to be Steven Patrick Morrissey), Johnny Marr and Mike Joyce," comments the *An Phoblacht/Republican News* journalist, adding: "And with names like that who could doubt their antecedents?" (Ibid. cols. a-b)
[621] 'Loyalist on parole shot at concert', *The Guardian,* 3 May 1999, p. 6, cols. h-i.

saying the title on air.[622] Artists looking to score counter-cultural points could do worse than being banned by the state broadcaster of the nation they were criticising, and such an act likely only increased interest in the work in question. These restrictions were not only an issue in the UK. An information sheet produced by the Working Group Against Censorship in Ireland reported that "RTE censorship has also banned music, including records from Christy Moore, The Pogues and even John Lennon and Paul McCartney."[623] Censorship of songs was by no means limited to those which referenced Irish nationalist or republican sentiment. However, this became a particular source of contention in relation to broadcasting restrictions placed on republican and loyalist groups from October 1988 in the UK, following regulations introduced by Home Secretary Douglas Hurd.[624] The Republic of Ireland had similar legislation under Section 31 of the Broadcasting Authority Act (1960).

In the UK, these restrictions were somewhat circumvented by actors and journalists reading out comments from Sinn Féin spokespeople and other figures subject to the ban, as it was interpreted as referring to direct statements rather than their content. As with the banning of specific songs, this only entrenched the perception of oppression to some, and made the state look ridiculous or bizarre to many others. Pro-loyalist songs would have been affected just as those by Lennon, McCartney et al were, but none approached the kind of mainstream airplay that would have brought them to censors' attention. This contributed to the impression that republicans and nationalists and their political and cultural expression were being targeted disproportionately, fuel to the fire of the hostility those activists and artists felt towards the state. The broadcasting bans and restrictions were clear attempts to delegitimise those affected and

[622] Maconie, Stuart, *The People's Songs: The Story of Modern Britain in 50 Records*, (London: Random House, 2014), p. 134.
[623] Working Group Against Censorship in Ireland.
[624] 'Broadcast ban leads terror fight', *The Guardian*, 20 October 1988, p. 1 cols. a-c; 'Critics attack Sinn Fein TV ban loopholes', *The Times*, 20 October 1988, p. 1 cols. a-c.

exclude them from mainstream discourse. This was acutely felt even with the relatively superficial manifestation of British broadcasting regulations, which, in their flimsiness and easy circumvention, appeared more as a point-scoring exercise than a genuine attempt to protect listeners from offensive or inflammatory material.

As might be expected, these attempts to restrict musical and wider political expression were met with protest and an even further entrenchment of the importance of such speech and song. The Working Group Against Censorship in Ireland proposed "a boycott campaign of companies that continue to support and advertise in the RTE Guide." In the UK, the Campaign for Free Speech on Ireland ran events such as 'Beat the Ban!' at Hackney Empire, featuring various musical acts.[625] A flyer for this event features a cartoon figure with a gagged mouth but still singing or speaking into a microphone, suggesting the 'gag' has only created even more defiance. Issues of censorship and free speech widened the potential support available to republican or nationalist-focused campaigns, drawing sympathy from those who would denounce armed struggle and bombing campaigns but also object to state regulation of political expression. Music and other artistic expression may be particularly emotive in this regard, as there is a sense that song and the arts in general should be free and unsuppressed: their active restriction and censorship evokes dictatorships and authoritarian regimes, not liberal democracies with nothing to be ashamed of.

Innocent until proven Irish: The Birmingham Six and Guildford Four.

One of the songs banned by the Independent Broadcasting Authority (IBA) in the UK, and almost certainly the Pogues song referred to in the above report on RTE, was *Streets of Sorrow/*

[625] Beat the Ban! Flyer.

Birmingham Six, from the band's 1988 album *If I Should Fall from Grace with God.* A 29 November 1988 briefing from Information on Ireland on responses to the new broadcasting restrictions reported an IBA statement that "the song alleges some convicted terrorists are not guilty and goes on to suggest that Irish people are at a disadvantage in British courts of law. That allegation might support or solicit or invite support for an organisation proscribed by the Home Secretary's directive, in that they indicate a general disagreement with the way in which the British Government responds to, and the courts deal with, the terrorist threat in the UK."[626] The ban was heavily criticised by supporters of the Birmingham Six's campaign, including the brother of one of their number, Richard McIlkenny, along with individuals working in radio programming.[627]

The song begins with just under two minutes of a mournful, acoustic ballad: an abrupt change of tempo and the emergence of the full band then heralds Shane MacGowan's snarling accusations. As the IBA statement suggests, the song is unequivocal in its perspective that the so-called 'Birmingham Six,' Patrick Joseph Hill, Hugh Callaghan, Gerard Hunter, John Walker, Richard McIlkenny and William Power, and the 'Guildford Four,' Gerard 'Gerry' Conlon, Patrick 'Paddy' Armstrong, Paul Michael Hill and Carole Richardson, had been falsely accused and convicted. The Guildford Four were convicted in 1975 and 1976 for involvement in the bombings of pubs in Guildford in October 1974, and the Birmingham Six were sentenced in 1975 for the November 1974 Birmingham pub bombings. Both groups claimed coercion and brutality by the police handling the cases, and had their convictions overturned in 1989 and 1991 respectively. Mistreatment by police is a key theme in the litany of injustices rattled through by MacGowan, including the explicit statement that they were framed. The song also links this miscarriage of justice with politically-motivated imprisonment in Northern Ireland through a

[626] 'Briefing: Some incidents following the broadcasting ban on Sinn Fein', 29 November 1988, p. 3.
[627] 'Ban on Six song slammed', *The Irish News*, 22 November 1988, p. 3 cols. a-c.

reference to the Maze, casting aspersions on the legitimacy of detaining *anyone* for paramilitary activity, in a similar manner to musical treatment of internment.

Christy Moore's song on the same subject, *Scapegoats*, sometimes titled *Birmingham Six*, similarly highlights the unjust and brutal nature of the "confessions" which led to conviction, and the absurdity that "battered and bruised, haunted looks upon their faces/ The judge accepted they confessed willingly."[628] Following a contemporary joke that the law followed a maxim of "innocent until proven Irish," The Pogues claim the ten in question were detained simply for their nationality, as this was the main criterion police were searching for in a suspect. Moore hints at police willingness to presume guilt for circumstantial reasons, but is more coy on the issue of ethnically-charged motivation.

The perception of being targeted primarily for being Irish was a potent contributor to hostility to the British government, in a similar sense to issues of censorship. It encourages sympathy from parts of the majority of the Irish diaspora who would not countenance active support for paramilitary activity. These songs which combined both issues were therefore extremely emotive. This perspective, of the British state versus innocent Irish people who could be you or your friends and family, in the wrong place on the day the police came looking for a scapegoat, was communally divisive and alienating along similar lines as internment and Bloody Sunday. Moreover, it reconciled the unusual status of the Birmingham Six and Guildford Four with regards to Irish republicanism. The Pogues' and Moore's songs could fit easily into the genre of republican prisoner songs in terms of tone, style and themes, but for the fact that the Birmingham Six and Guildford Four were not politically-motivated prisoners.

[628] Lyrics by Moore and E. Cowan. Moore, p. 218.

The problems affecting these prisoners were different from republicans held in Great Britain, and extremely far removed from the circumstances of those imprisoned in Northern Ireland. Thus, the focus is moved onto unjust politically-motivated imprisonment, not the prisoners themselves, their qualities or actions, a sentiment that links the Birmingham Six and Guildford Four to actual paramilitary prisoners. These were all questions of brutality by British security forces and accountability gone awry, of police acting against one comparatively powerless part of the population, and unchecked courts carrying out their will. If an individual or campaign cared about the Special Powers Act, internment, Diplock courts, Bloody Sunday, strip-searching at Armagh or the right to political prisoner status, they probably also cared about the Guildford Four and Birmingham Six. Songs such as *Streets of Sorrow/ Birmingham Six*, along with the censorship that proved their point, were integral in drawing and maintaining these links.[629] Concerts and ceilidhs to raise support around the issue (such as one featuring Peggy Seeger), also enhanced a feeling of collective persecution and resistance to it.[630]

Pieces by more well-known artists with an international platform could thus function as a gateway into interest in the conflict and the prisoner issue. The greater the focus on sentiment over detail, the better to facilitate the broadest possible sympathy and solidarity. In one sense, censorship could limit this, as listeners would not encounter a banned song on the radio or television, two of the key ways in which music of a certain level of success was disseminated. On the other hand, censorship added to a song's notoriety and radical chic credentials and thus streamlined its journey to a sympathetic audience. Bands who dabbled in political issues but did not make it their entire raison d'être were particularly effective stepping stones between more casual sympathisers and the cause in question, as they had an audience far wider than any rebel

[629] 'It is surely a measure of the strength of Republican ideas that they are barred from the broadcasting media,'*An Glór Gafa* claimed, suggesting that such regulations were interpreted, and could be promoted, as a sign of the movement's potency (Untitled, *An Glór Gafa*, Vol. 1 No. 1, Autumn 1989, p. 3).
[630] 'Folk Music and Ceilí,'*Free the Birmingham Six* leaflet.

song ensemble or flute band could dream of. *Streets of Sorrow/ Birmingham Six* appeared on *If I Should Fall from Grace with God* along with *Fairytale of New York,* which is by far The Pogues' biggest commercial success and still a popular Christmas song to this day. How many people have bought or accessed the album because of that bittersweet radio fixture, let it run on and found themselves listening to a barbed commentary on British injustices in Northern Ireland and the apparent evisceration of the rule of law? It is hard to imagine another medium, whether artwork or overt political propaganda, able to achieve this Trojan horse effect with such ease.

"Party" songs: Entertainment, emotional release and the domestic sphere.

Mainstream artists brought the Northern Irish conflict and aspects of the prisoner issue to a wider audience via entertainment. This amalgamation between the political and the entertaining was also achieved at more local level, as well as within the prison, as has been seen. This entertainment and enjoyment factor, present in *The Lid of Me Granny's Bin* and other pieces described above, is often overlooked in terms of paramilitary and wider community culture. Trauma, stress, pressure, violence, duty, grief and insecurity may account for much of the experience of growing up and living in a highly politically-engaged community during the Northern Irish conflict, and this was certainly conveyed in musical responses to it. Nevertheless, people seek humour, fun and distraction wherever they can find them, perhaps even more so in the face of such adverse circumstances. This is a form of coping and adaptation, from the liberation suggested by escapism to the feeling of power evoked by lampooning others. This was a feature of prison life, and families and communities outside responded to the prisoner issue in a similar way. Popular, mainstream music was one way through which this distraction and relief could be achieved. As previously noted, another was the use of comedy, satire, spoof and "party" songs to entertain and express oneself in a more light-hearted, although not necessarily less political, manner than the standard, serious rebel song from either side allowed. Unlike

generic mainstream music, these lighter political pieces could be extremely specific, responsive to recent events and anchored in the community, providing a relief from the more traumatic elements of communal identity while simultaneously strengthening and reaffirming commitment to it.

Celebrations and communal ties.

As well as standalone songs such as the loyalist *Bobby's Anthem* or republican *Provie Birdie*, entire albums have been put together with the effect of coding social life according to communal affiliation. CDs such as *12th Euphoria Platinum Collection* and *Ultimate 12th Party Mix* make political music firmly recreational. They also link this music to positive events, unlike the funerals, commemorations and protests explored above, and thus the positive emotions, memories and bonding they entail. Political musical expression during the conflict was often motivated by anger, hostility and exclusion, but there were also weddings, cultural events, political festivities and other socialising to which the "party" side of the canon was the soundtrack. Social and geographical segregation only enhanced and facilitated this. This is one of the reasons why music which to one ear sounds hostile, even hateful, can be cherished by another. This aspect of communal life had significant implications for prisoners, through the habits and divisive cultural practices which they imported into the prison, the links they maintained with the outside community and culture while incarcerated, and the knowledge that they would someday fully rejoin it. Discussing the view that republicans should have opposed prison segregation in order to convert loyalists, former republican prisoner Seánna Walsh argues that: "even with the limited numbers of converts, if any, which could be made in these circumstances, all it would take would be one night of 'freedom' back out in the big bad world, a 'do' for the said prisoner and as the band strikes up the 'Billy Boys' or the 'Fighting men of the UDA' or whatever, he'd be up bopping with the best of them. If loyalists, who had changed

their views and outlook on life, returned to the streets of their own areas they wouldn't be long in rediscovering their old loyalties. They would have to; they just wouldn't be able to survive without it."[631]

The same issue would likely arise for republicans who "changed their views." Political music thus mitigated prisoners' social and civic isolation, as the pressure of the community, real or imagined, weighed heavily on the minds and cultural behaviour of prisoners even while physically separated from it. It also demonstrates the coercive power of even the fun aspects of political music and its communal use: the prisoner in this example may be socialising, dancing and enjoying the party and his freedom, but he is also being reminded of his role in the wider group and the conduct, outlook and opinions required.

One notable aspect of this more fun use of music by loyalists was the appropriation of popular songs for political purposes, of which Tina Turner's *Simply the Best*, associated with the UVF and Rangers football club, is perhaps the most well-known example.[632] Others include the song *Michael Stone*, in honour of the renegade Milltown Cemetery attacker, sung to the tune of Kenny Rogers' *The Gambler*. The song *Long Kesh Prison Blues* is a loyalist version of Johnny Cash's *Folsom Prison Blues*, one of the most famous mainstream prison-related songs. Lyrics altered to include anti-Catholic epithets and references to flutes add an unmistakable local stamp to the template provided by Cash. This appropriation appears to have been a more popular practice for loyalists, but was not limited to them. Republicans sang *My Old Man's a Provo* to the tune of *My Old Man's a Dustman*, in which the father is helped to escape from Long Kesh by Semtex hidden in his birthday cake candles. A piece known as *The S.A.M. Song*, referring to surface-to-air missiles, was sung to the tune of *Ghost Riders in the Sky*, another darkly comic

[631] McKeown, p. 89.
[632] This and other songs in this paragraph are all examples of "lyrical drift" (Rolston, 2001, p. 55).

appropriation. The use of established tunes allows for these richer reference points, aids quick, even spontaneous development, and makes them easy to remember, pass on and join in with.

Imprisonment, romantic relationships and family life.

This use of music was a profound communal bonding experience, in which few outside the immediate local group or closely connected to it could partake. It is a peculiar kind of brutalised absurdism that can make light of the grim, even fatal danger symbolised by missiles and grenade attacks, or the fact of Semtex and imprisonment being somewhat normal reference points. It requires living with that danger on a daily basis for a long period. Songs such as *My Old Man's a Provo* were a means of making sense of the emotional demands of life in a family or neighbourhood in which paramilitarism was a fact of life, and coping with the impact of periods of imprisonment, violence and general insecurity upon the domestic and communal sphere.

Songs that dealt with imprisonment directly were also a form of symbolic communication with the absent, imprisoned father, husband or boyfriend, which could be painful but nonetheless played a role in social and celebratory occasions. Fairweather et al describe a "hen party" in the republican neighbourhood of Turf Lodge during the prison protests, for a young woman engaged to a blanket protester: "At least four of the women in the room had sons on the blanket. We were not there to talk politics but to celebrate the engagement of a young girl about to be married. We were there to have fun, to drink, to drown sorrows."[633] Amongst the drinking, joking and dressing up, there is an instance of one woman breaking down in tears and another singing a song about the H-Blocks, before declaring "Victory to the blanket men! Up the IRA!", which brings the atmosphere of sadness to a close.[634] For women so directly affected by politically-

[633] Fairweather, et al., p. 88.
[634] Ibid., pp. 88 - 90.

motivated imprisonment and paramilitarism, there was little distinction between the political sphere and the social or the domestic, reflected in this intermingling between more apolitical social life and rebel songs and slogans.

As noted with regards to *The Men Behind the Wire*, songs which directly addressed the communal impact of imprisonment simultaneously provided an emotional release and directed or inculcated certain behaviours and values. These often mirrored the values encouraged within prison walls, particularly endurance and solidarity. While the expression of these virtues and commitment to the prisoners was widely encouraged, these messages were particularly relevant to prisoners' wives, girlfriends and mothers. It was these women upon whom the burden of maintaining the home, marriage or family through the period of imprisonment mostly fell, along with related political activity such as involvement in relatives' campaigns. As well as this domestic labour, a certain moral rectitude regarding loyalty and fidelity was also expected, a requirement facilitated by the tightly-knit local communities from which many prisoners came. The wife of a republican prisoner who worked in a local bar stated that "all his friends either drank or worked in the bar ...so if I'd put a foot wrong he'd have been told right away. It used to get on my nerves that, their eyes were always on you."[635]

One song, entitled *It's All Over* and written by a loyalist prisoner that appeared in the 1974 *UDA Detainee Song Book*, was explicitly clear in what would happen if a prisoner's wife put a foot wrong: "You promised me when I was in prison/ That you would always love me and be true,"

[635] "A Prisoner's Wife," *Journal of Prisoners on Prison*, Vol. 7 No. 1, 1996 - 1997, p. 75. This expectation of surveillance regarding prisoners' families went both ways. The aforementioned issue of *The Tattler* from 1972 featured a message to the community to bring forward informers or "touts," alongside a cartoon of the punishment kneecapping those informers would be met with, with a direct appeal to prisoners families: "We ask the people of the Second Battalion Area to give us their co-operation in bringing these people to our courts. Remember some of your menfolk are rotting in the Maze and Crumlin Road because of these people." ('Touts', *The Tattler*, 1972, No. 24 Vol. 2, p. 1.)

the first lines report, "But now I'm being told by other people/ About the things that you've begun to do." The threatening tone is made even clearer in the final verse: "I didn't think that my wife would be/ Unfaithful, I always thought that she/ Would play the game, but when they/ Let me out of Long Kesh Prison/ I'll make her wish she'd never heard my name."[636] This piece is highly unusual in its condoning of domestic violence, which I have not found elsewhere on either side. It is also unclear to what degree it would have been sung or distributed. However, the expression of these views was clearly seen as valid and relatable enough to be published in a text sanctioned by the UDA. This suggests a communal element of outright coercion and threats, at least in certain cases, underpinning women's demonstrations of loyalty to prisoners, and the use of lyrics to spread those messages.

More common in musical references to women's role than direct threats was the glorification of exemplary wives and mothers of past hero-martyrs.[637] There is far less loyalist musical engagement with this theme, perhaps due to the comparative lack of historical tradition around prisoners and, by extension, prisoners' wives. Various republican or Irish nationalist-themed songs that developed in the 1970s and 1980s emphasised loyalty and sacrifice on behalf of women through a historical lens. *The Fields of Athenry*, set around the 1840s, includes a message from the prisoner protagonist to a woman named Mary, in which he instructs her to be

[636] *UDA Detainee Song Book*, 1974.
[637] One loyalist piece, *Women Together*, from 1972's *Orange Loyalist Songs* song book, takes a swipe at republicanism attempting to present itself as reverential towards its women, through reference to the tarring and feathering and other "disciplinary" measures that were used against them for perceived social misdemeanours: "They are dope-testing in Ballymurphy/ So all you young women beware/ For if you support 'Women together'/ They'll come round and cut off your hair/ They don't give a rap if you're pregnant/ In fact the publicity's good/ For there's plenty of red paint and feathers/ If you don't just do as you should!/ All the "heroes" will come in and take you/ And bind you with stout rope and chain/ If you have a nerve to condemn them/ You'll only invite them again!". As with numerous other examples, this attack on the enemy was unlikely to ever reach its orbit, nor that of the young women of Ballymurphy for whom it expresses concern. Rather, this is a satirical attempt to bolster loyalist morale through highlighting perceived republican hypocrisy in terms of that movement's focus on heroism, and the trope that republican paramilitaries were the righteous saviours and defenders of their otherwise abandoned community. Women Together was a local women's group.

dignified in raising their child. Similarly, *Grace*, another rebel song still widely used in part due to its association with Celtic, describes the marriage of Grace Gifford and Joseph Mary Plunkett in Kilmainham Gaol, shortly before the latter is executed for his role in the Easter Rising. As the protagonist will imminently be widowed, there is less direct pressure upon her in terms of fidelity or dignity. Nevertheless, the song's emotional farewell places a clear emphasis on the value of women sacrificing their own needs or dreams of married life for the prisoner, so that he might sacrifice himself for his cause. In focusing on different historical periods yet similar intertwined political and personal demands, these songs suggest a proud tradition of emotionally martyred republican wives, which likely resonated with the wives, girlfriends and female relatives of prisoners during the more recent conflict. Both *Grace* and the *Fields of Athenry* can still be heard at social gatherings, pubs and sporting occasions, intertwining these sentiments with entertainment and socialising, rather than spreading them via prescriptive political diktat or threats.

This subtle inculcation of the appropriate behaviour for prisoners' wives and families through song seems to have been more prevalent than the threats of *It's All Over*, although domestic violence and coercion was undoubtedly a social issue. The emotionally-charged amalgamation of the political and personal at the hen party described above is a counterpoint to the sense that women were simply burdened with maintaining relationships during periods of imprisonment and threatened with violence if they did not. Some women considered supporting a politically-motivated prisoner husband an act of political resistance: "I want to wait for him because he's my husband and we had a good relationship, and I have two children belonging to him and I'm determined these people, the Brits, are not going to smash that," states one woman in Rolston and Tomlinson's investigation into the effect of imprisonment on families in Northern Ireland.[638]

[638] Rolston and Tomlinson, p. 176.

Others left their husbands and the area, unwilling to sacrifice their own lives to waiting and depending upon prisoners' welfare organisations.[639] However, songs such as those described above, particularly in the republican community, sent clear messages as to the ideal behaviour expected from women left on the outside. Combined with the cultural emphasis placed on glorifying the self-sacrifice of paramilitary men, not only through song but also murals, funeral practices and other memorials, any betrayal of those men as they demonstrated maximum endurance and strength in prison seemed particularly weak and morally deficient.[640]

The fact that many of these songs were central to social life entangled the transmission of these values with entertainment, enjoyment and seemingly apolitical interactions with family and friends in various ways, making political values and demands inextricable from personal needs and beliefs. The impact of paramilitary imprisonment thus did not stop at the prison gates, the front door of the home, or the dedicated fundraising event, but was present at the pub, the club, the football match, the hen night and the wedding. On the one hand, this provided an emotional boost and release: prisoners' families were hardly likely to forget about their interned son or husband on the blanket, even during a social event, and likely wanted to recognise their suffering and share in the pain and solidarity of others in similar situations. On the other, this lack of delineation between the personal and the political or the domestic and the paramilitary created a tacitly coercive and claustrophobic maxim to "stand by your man" at all times, as this role was so integral to communal identity, social life and reputation.

[639] *Time Stands Still*, p. 15.
[640] See McDowell, Sara, 'Commemorating dead 'men': gendering the past and present in post-conflict Northern Ireland,' *Gender, Place and Culture*, 15:4, pp. 335-354.

Bringing it all back home: Prisoner releases and communal responses.

Rallies and campaigns.

During the 1990s, the most significant mobilisation around prisoners demanded their release. These campaigns used music, in particular flute and drum bands, rather than song. Bands were a regular feature of general loyalist demonstrations and activities, related to prisoners and more broadly. They functioned on two levels: the more universal benefits of making noise and thus displaying power and grabbing attention for the march or rally; and the assertion of territoriality and strength that arose from this genre's clear associations with wider loyalist identity. These demonstrations were held in local neighbourhoods or on a larger scale, such as a "Rally for the release of all Loyalist Prisoners" on 13th October 1995, billed as "A Mass Band Parade and Rally to the City Hall."[641] The promotional material for this event requests "dignified co-operation" and "no alcohol," underlining that this is a serious political event rather than a festive occasion, and perhaps suggesting a concern over image in the aftermath of Drumcree. Bands also played at paramilitary funerals and memorials held for their members where applicable, contributing to their place at the emotional apex of politically-charged community life for loyalists. The tension, anger, hostility and loss for which such music had provided the soundtrack was then brought to bear upon the rallies and protests at which bands played, a potent wave to be channelled towards issues such as prisoner release.

Republicans also used bands for political events. Republican prisoner release group Saoirse held various marches and rallies incorporating music, including one demonstration demanding "the release of all political prisoners and an end to British militarisation" featuring "prominent

[641] 'Rally for the release of all Loyalist Prisoners,' Combined Loyalist Prisoners Release Group.

speakers and musicians" on 18th December 1994, and a similar march to "release all political prisoners now," promising "prominent speakers and marching bands" on 30th April 1995.[642] This practice was not limited to Northern Ireland. Bands were often used in republican repatriation campaigns in Great Britain. "That quiet 8th of November was soon ringing with the tunes of the bands and the slogans and chants of the marchers," the Glasgow-based *The Irish Prisoner* wrote of a day of protest in Newcastle and outside Frankland and Durham prisons, adding that "some of the P.O.Ws in Frankland have said that this vocal and noisy demonstration was clearly heard from within and really gave a boost to their morale."[643] "Nine republican bands and 1,000 people marched through Wakefield" in May 1988, "demanding the repatriation of Irish political prisoners, held in the city's gaol, to allow them to serve their sentences closer to their homes and families."[644] Republican flute bands were similarly used to protest strip-searching of female prisoners in Britain.[645]

These events demonstrate how the prisoner issue on the outside developed from internment to the recognition of political status, to release in its later stages, as well as the focus of its parallel incarnation in Britain on repatriation and strip-searching. The fact lobbying for prisoner release appears to have been expressed more in political action with musical accompaniment, rather than lyrics agitating for and bemoaning the fate of prisoners, may indicate a greater faith in the political process by the mid-1990s. It likely also reflects the fact that there was already such a dense, emotive canon of prisoner-related songs from the preceding two decades of the conflict and earlier. This issue was less emotive than internment, the prison protests and hunger strikes,

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[642] March and Rally leaflet, Saoirse, 18th December 1994; March and Rally leaflet, Saoirse, 30th April 1995. Saoirse literature described the group as "a non-party political body with one objective - the release of all political prisoners." (*Saoirse: Build the peace and release the prisoners* leaflet). However, it appears to have been at least unofficially linked to Sinn Féin.
[643] 'Repatriate Irish PoWs!', *The Irish Prisoner*, no. 8, 1986, no page numbers.
[644] 'May Day marchers support Irish prisoners,' *Leeds Other Paper with What's On*, 6 May 1988, p. 1 cols. A-d.
[645] 'Durham', *The Irish Prisoner*, No. 10, 1987, p. 10.

in part because prison conditions had vastly improved and, eventually, a peace deal and subsequent release programme edged on to the horizon. The sonic power of bands were still needed to motivate the community and make it heard, but the greater exposition made possible by reactive lyrical songs was less relevant.

Saoirse was a particularly active campaigning body around the issue of prisoner welfare in the 1990s. As well as the incorporation of music into parades, marches and rallies in Northern Ireland, the organisation also ran social events, including at pubs in areas of London with a notable Irish diaspora population.[646] These areas also provided Saoirse with a location for more directly political outreach, such as a "Women in the Struggle" conference held at Camden Irish Centre in December 1995, which was combined with a "Christmas social" and "traditional music."[647] This event is notable for its list of speakers, in which a "recently released POW" appears alongside Judith Ward, who was wrongfully convicted of an IRA bombing on the M62 in 1974 and is described here as a "framed prisoner," and Gareth Pierce, a solicitor who had represented Ward and was also involved with the Guildford Four campaign. This suggests an active attempt to draw links between miscarriages of justice through which innocent Irish people were imprisoned for IRA activity, and the imprisonment of admitted and even proud IRA members, transposing the more easily-won sympathy for the former onto the latter. Through intermingling the political and the social, these events drew upon practices used decades earlier by the Anti-Internment League and other prisoner welfare and campaigning groups, adapted for the contemporary context in order to maximise potential sympathies and broad movement-building.

[646] Saoirse social evening flyer, 23 March 1995, Victoria pub, Holloway Road.
[647] Saoirse Campaign to release Irish Political Prisoners - 'Women in the Struggle' Conference flyer. 9th December 1995.

"Drama, music and craic:" From agitation to nostalgia.

As well as raising funds and more general awareness for prisoners and their families during the period of incarceration, music was also used to address the issue of the returning prisoner. I have found small cards inviting the recipient to "welcome home" parties at the Felons, presumably from prison.[648] Such events demonstrate the emotional impact of release upon friends and family and the importance former-prisoner status can have for an individual's identity and community standing. As argued in the preceding chapter, this seems to have been particularly the case for republicans over loyalists, due to a combination of republicans' long-standing respect for the prisoner and its ideological centrality. The greater number of republican former prisoners also aided a more complex and dense social life based on that shared experience.

The Felons Club and other institutions also held events such as a 1994 "Gaol Quiz (by popular demand)" with "quizmaster 'Gerry "Bamber" Adams," and prison-related commemorations and celebrations including a 1993 event in honour of the preceding twenty years of The Green Cross.[649] Key prison events have also been marked with various social events, including the "Great Escape" of September 1983 and the burning of Long Kesh in October 1974.[650] Along with events and exhibitions, radio was also utilised to mark significant anniversaries in the republican prison struggle, bringing commemoration to the community rather than vice versa. "Kool SF Sinn Fein radio 106 FM" aired a "special broadcast to mark the 12th anniversary of the H Block Hunger Strike" on 24th April, 1993.[651] Prospective listeners were invited in advance

[648] 'Small card, 9th November 1995.
[649] 'What's on in the Felons Club on Festival Week 7th-14th August,' [1994]; 'Anniversary Celebration of Green Cross 1973 - 1993', Felons Club, 18th November.
[650] 'The Great Escape 25th Anniversary', 21st June (presumably 1998) flyer; 'The Great Escape', featuring Gerry Kelly, Bik McFarlane and Bobby Storey (plus folk group and disco), 22nd November 2002 flyer; 'Long Kesh Cages Reunion 1974 - 2004', small card.
[651] 'Kool SF Sinn Fein Radio 106 FM' flyer.

to “Get a request played write to [Sinn Féin office] Connolly House 147 Andersonstown Road.” This allowed a greater degree of audience participation, spontaneity and potential diversity than the use of music at many memorial proceedings.

There were also reunions based solely around the prison experience: a ‘Cages Reunion’ was held at Conway Mill in 1993, described as “a reunion celebration including drama, music and craic.”[652] Such events indicate the significance of the prison experience to wider republican culture, and how this was intertwined with music and other aspects of social life. The nostalgia and even fondness suggested by reunions and a dedicated quiz, as well as an event to honour the prisoner welfare organisation The Green Cross, is also an example of republicans unilaterally awarding themselves political prisoner status, irrespective of legal definitions. Ordinary prisoners may keep in touch with other individuals they meet in prison, although even this is unlikely en masse, but it is hard to imagine a well-organised, publicised and celebratory ‘Wormwood Scrubs Reunion,’ let alone the existence of facilities established for that very purpose a generation earlier.

The eras and events invoked also point to the various roles different periods of imprisonment play in republican mythology: the “cages,” i.e. the period of internment and Special Category Status, can be associated with the light-hearted imagery of “music and craic” in a way that the protesting period likely would not. Similarly, the August 1994 “Gaol Quiz” also suggests the cultural, communal and, by extension political, benefits of credentials gained via politically-motivated imprisonment in the republican community. That community’s social life was a forum for the reinforcement of those credentials and benefits. It is not surprising that Gerry Adams acted as “Quizmaster” given his position as Sinn Féin president and prominent figure in

[652] ‘Cages Reunion’ flyer, 8 August 1993.

west Belfast. Nevertheless, this gentle public reminder of Adams' former prisoner "badge of honour" and assertion of his role in both generating, and now memorialising, republican prison culture in the weeks leading up to the crucial 31st August 1994 IRA ceasefire surely did him no harm.[653] As Gerry Kelly has pointed out, "'The fact that I have been in jail, while it might be detrimental to you in any other society or country, means I'm looked upon here as someone who was prepared to put their livelihood, life, whatever, on the line… It gives you "street cred"."[654]

Music and memorabilia.

As the prison struggle transitioned from a live issue into mythology, it became a prominent feature of memorabilia and other cultural ephemera, particularly for republicans but also for loyalists. This phenomenon is a means of maintaining connections with previous phases of political action. It is also a way for those prevented by age, geography or other circumstances from claiming a direct role in such events to partake, albeit in a diluted fashion, in the cultural credentials former prisoners can access. More practically, such marketisation is a means of generating funds and maintaining a form of momentum following the removal of the emotive issues around which support could be mobilised that have been addressed above.

This use of memorabilia is evidently not a new phenomenon, and builds on practices established during the conflict and its more intense focus on both funds and cultural artefacts. LPs, tapes and CDs were, and in some cases remain, available at a range of locations: football matches, stalls, specialist shops, political offices, commemorations and cultural events such as Easter and the 12th of July. More sanitised rebel song collections can even be found at tourist shops across

[653] 'It's Over', *Belfast Telegraph*, 31 August 1994, p. 1 cols. a-i.
[654] Frampton, p. 50.

Ireland. They were available by mail order catalogue, from shops dedicated to republican and loyalist paraphernalia. Shankill Productions, The Loyalist Shop, Ulster Souvenirs, The Union Jack Shop and others offered expansive lists of recordings, from flute, drum and accordion bands to vocal pieces, comedy songs and Rangers, Linfield and Glentoran anthems as well as those relating to specific paramilitaries, alongside song books.[655] One such catalogue, of the Ulster Information Service, carried the subtitle "Loyalist Prisoners Shop," suggesting a fundraising link between the prisoners and any profit generated.[656] Prisoner imagery was also incorporated into products, similar to the Bobby Sands memorabilia described above: a Union Jack Shop catalogue seemingly from 2002 or later offered a "Loyalist Prisoners Association (UDA) - shirt" for £15.00.[657] As well as those sold more directly via Sinn Féin or Irish American outlets, republican catalogues such as *Republican Publications* advertised cassettes and records.

Republican and loyalist enterprises offered, and continue to offer, a plethora of artefacts, literature and other memorabilia, spanning posters, badges, t-shirts, keyrings, flags, tobacco tins, books, calendars and diaries, prints, ornaments and jewellery, even tea towels and baby bibs. This can be seen as attempts to normalise or commercialise the UDA, UVF, Bobby Sands, the H-Blocks and other names and imagery treated almost like brands, particularly in the post-conflict period when the urgent need of the prisoners and their families was removed, and the nostalgia element added. On the other hand, these items and the communities and enterprises built around them maintain the presence of these symbols in everyday life, and thus the power of the related groups, individuals and ideas. They are another forum for the issues of image, respect and cultural capital that have beset community relations and provide momentum for feelings of besiegement and denigration. Just as both sides have their fair share of base, simplistic songs, so

[655] *Ulster Souvenirs Mail Order Catalogue*; *Shankill Productions* catalogue.
[656] *Ulster Information Service* leaflet.
[657] *The Union Jack Shop* catalogue.

too have both produced a comparable degree of kitsch memorabilia.[658] The republican musical canon's links with wider "Irish" culture mean it has a greater volume of sophisticated and literary lyrics in its arsenal, skewing the body of song towards this end of the spectrum, and the republican paraphernalia market similarly benefits from these associations. This is also aided by the more coherent, outward-looking and image-conscious nature of Sinn Féin in comparison to parties or campaigning groups with loyalist connections, and its greater drive and ability to promote, guard and deploy cultural activism in the ongoing campaign for a united Ireland.

This chapter has argued that the use of music within the prison was supported throughout the conflict by a dense and varied prisoner-related musical culture on the outside. This outside culture, in turn, was heavily influenced by the musical production and political action generated within the prison. This mutually reinforcing relationship manifested most potently at a local level, but was also affected by, and contributed to, aspects of the wider mainstream music scene. Just as within the prison, the use of music related to prisoners on the outside was dependent on the political, socio-cultural and penal context of the period in which it was made, which could affect both medium and content. Nevertheless, certain broad functions of prisoner-related music can be traced through the three decades of conflict: raising funds and resources for prisoners and dependents; use at protests; bonding the community and asserting that identity against an enemy; providing emotional release; constructing and transmitting the significance of the historical and contemporary prisoner; drawing links with other movements; and directing the emotional responses and practical behaviours of the local community around the issue of prisoners.

[658] Two memorable items I have seen for sale on research trips were union jack-emblazoned toilet paper at an Easter Rising centenary event in Dublin, and a child's t-shirt featuring the slogan "Proud to be a Prod" in the run-up to 12th July in Belfast, suggesting neither community has a monopoly on sophisticated commemoration, or lack thereof.

This vast, varied network of musical reflections of and interventions in the prisoner issue meant it was enmeshed with socio-cultural and domestic life as well as political activism. This effect was more prevalent and pressing for republican communities, due to the greater historical and ideological value placed upon prisoners, but was also experienced in loyalist areas with paramilitary ties. Mobilisation and commitment motivated by and facilitated through music was clearly beneficial to prisoners during their incarceration, materially and emotionally. It also affected their communal standing upon release, due to the momentum and mythology developed during the prisoner-related campaigns and associated cultural production. These tensions and the use of music to reflect and reinforce them clearly did not begin with the recent conflict, nor the prisoner issue within it. The decades of violence built upon pre-existing division and strengthened communal identity internally and against the other, developing the integral role of music within these divides. Prisoners and campaigns around them were a key strand in this process. While the armed conflict and paramilitary imprisonment may have ended, issues of cultural rights, identity expression and insecurity continue to dominate the Northern Irish political context. As with Special Category Status, the emotions, myths and competing authority stirred up during the conflict through music related to politically-motivated imprisonment have proved "much easier to start than to stop."[659]

[659] HC Deb 13 February 1975 vol 886 cc585-8.

Conclusion.

I have attempted to situate music as one of the key cultural practices used by politically-motivated prisoners during the conflict to construct their identity, assert authority and contest that of the state. Music was a critical vehicle through which inmates adapted to imprisonment and adapted imprisonment for their own purposes. Alongside other behaviours and artefacts such as handicrafts, murals, writing and the Irish language, and more direct modes of defiance including escape, protest and violent action, music was a means of surviving the paramilitary-specific prison experience. It also contributed to shaping that imprisonment into an active site of the wider conflict and cultural struggle, not merely a feature of it.

Music represented and reinforced ethno-nationalist identity in the prison and outside. It could act as an emotional regulator and release: the act of singing and content of songs helped prisoners cope with the rigorous demands and deprivations of prison life, encompassing the universal pains of imprisonment and those specific to the contemporary penal context. Music-based acts of defiance constituted claims of rival authority intended to reject ordinary prisoner status, the prison authorities and, by extension, the state.

As would be expected, political music associated with the relevant paramilitary and broader ethno-nationalist group was crucial to this emotional expression, group consolidation and acts of aggression. My research also highlights that popular music was integral to prisoners' musical construction of identity, as well as the political canon. In comparison to the relatively static themes of political music, prisoners' engagement with popular music trends and related culture can be more revealing of the local, class and generational aspects which shaped the paramilitary

prisoner experience just as much as overarching political forces. The artists and genres referenced in memoirs and recollections also suggest how prisoners thought of themselves and, perhaps more significantly for understanding the identity-construction of their political movements, how they would like to be thought of.

The use of mainstream modern music alongside political standards indicated a new type of paramilitary prisoner, who embraced contemporary youth culture and their ethno-nationalist canon. This amalgamation enabled prisoners to broaden the ideological links and references their musical behaviours entailed, outwith the comparatively narrow confines of perceived or actual traditions. Wider musical genres allowed for more comprehensive self-expression and emotional release, as well as a means of constructing and performing peripheral aspects of paramilitary identity, including international radical chic or assertions of toughness and masculinity.

It also contributed heavily to prison social life, and the related camaraderie, friendships, humour and gossip. This social aspect of prison life was no doubt beneficial at the time, and has also aided the nostalgia constructed around certain periods of imprisonment in later years. Social interaction is central to the presentation of imprisonment in many former prisoners' memoirs and anecdotes, and often has a musical element, such as concerts, singsongs and playing instruments. The camaraderie and bonding music and song convey in these sources, combined with later reunions and events based upon it, is subtly suggestive of the difference between the paramilitary and ordinary prisoner experience.

For republicans, the persistence of musical production and social interaction around it in extreme, far less jovial conditions, plays a similar role, as do songs, commemorative events, recordings and other paraphernalia related to the protesting period. Asserting political prisoner status through these recollections is, of course, much less direct than the political actions undertaken in the campaign for such recognition. Nevertheless, it remains potent as retrospective proof of legitimacy, and of the authority of the modern movement linked to those actions, in no small part through its harnessing of related cultural production in the intervening years.

The significance of prison music to the relevant movement was a two-way process. It relied on the wider communities to support, facilitate, receive, distribute and promote music produced within prison walls, and respond with their own, as well as on prisoners to generate it. Music was motivation and action: the emotional effects it inspired could be harnessed in myriad practical ways to engage with the prisoner issue. Attending or organising fundraising events, buying records, songbooks, decorative harps and drums and other memorabilia, donating instruments and records, and singing songs written by or, more commonly, in support of them at social, sporting and other occasions, were all ways in which the wider community could feel they were supporting prisoners and contributing to their wider cause.

This type of political action had a number of advantages: the relatively few resources needed to sing; the established body of song and venues that could be utilised; the comparatively low-stakes, non-violent aspect of such cultural protest which facilitated widespread participation. The transmission of these songs through socio-cultural life meant that, for those who had strong ties to their community, singing was an easy way of spontaneously showing support and allegiance. It indicated belonging, a sign of the singer's authority and credentials in a local

context in which solidarity and support for or, at least acquiescence to, paramilitary dominance was extremely important.

In communities that were closely connected to paramilitary prisoners, songs such as *The Men Behind the Wire* addressed and reflected very real trauma, anger, defiance and fear that motivated and responded to musical representation. This was not limited to the immediate families, neighbourhoods or other groups with direct ties to prisoners, although it was likely stronger for them with regards to this particular category of music. The conflict was characterised by tension, insecurity and emotional distress that reached far further afield than paramilitary sympathies, including across generations and into the diaspora. Music that decried imprisonment or extolled the virtues of prisoners, identified with on a broad ethno-nationalist level if not in terms of their offences, functioned as a bulwark against this insecurity through invoking strength and solidarity. The relatively well-defined, even repetitive nature of the canon of prisoner and paramilitary-related music made it apt for claustrophobic, coercive pressure to perform commitment, but also contributed to its role as an emotional outlet, providing a template for self-expression and mutual support. This was true both inside and outside prison.

Crucially, a substantial body of music in some way associated with prisoners meant different needs and audiences could be addressed and reflected on their own terms. Distressed at the death of Bobby Sands, but do not wish to dwell on his violent activity? Play or sing *The People's Own MP*. Emotionally moved by historical examples of politically-motivated imprisonment in Ireland, but also keen to show support for the modern paramilitary movement? Join in with the widely-prevalent addition of "IRA!" to the chorus of *The Fields of Athenry*. The range of styles, spanning party tunes, football songs, sentimental ballads, more musically-sophisticated pieces

and songs connected to the punk scene or mainstream artists also enhanced the variety of audiences, occasions and emotions that could be enlisted.

These songs generally intend to preach to the converted, and anyone who explicitly opposed the prisoner or paramilitary movement in question would almost certainly not be moved from that position by a song, no matter how emotive. However, within a broadly sympathetic network, the obfuscation of certain aspects of the subject by one song and their romanticisation and even exaggeration by another, without explicit contradiction, allowed for a diverse range of sentiments to be accommodated. This was a significant advantage for attempts to build a somewhat coherent narrative in a complex situation that could inspire conflicting needs and responses in a single individual, let alone at the collective level.

Particularly for republicans, these somewhat nebulous representations lifted musical interaction with the prisoner issue out of narrow local confines and brought it, however superficially, to a wider audience. More mainstream artists, along with broader counter-cultural or political movements, established or suggested links with the issue of paramilitary imprisonment in Northern Ireland through musical references and events. As with prisoners' engagement with mainstream music, this often entailed elements of radical chic or other posturing, and, for the most popular artists or distanced activists, it could be a means of performing solidarity and connections that were in reality limited or flimsy. Nevertheless, it was significant for wider perceptions of prisoners, and prisoners' own understanding of their image and identity.

As I have argued throughout the thesis, these factors were not equally applicable across all prisoner groups or all penal phases. At the beginning of this research, I expected to find that

music was a more central element of prison life, and wider mobilisation around prisoners, for republicans than loyalists. Having family links to Glasgow, and having lived there for several years, I am familiar with some elements of sectarian football culture and related music. From this exposure, it had appeared to me that "republican" or rebel music is a more coherent genre, and that songs related to imprisonment are more common within it, than that related to loyalism and its periphery. Overall, I would conclude that this has largely borne out, and music was more central to the prison experience and campaigns around prisoners for republicans. However, as I have demonstrated, loyalists did produce a range of songs, song books, records, music-based events and mobilisations related to prisoners - more than I had expected to find. What has become clear during the research process is that while a rich body of localised material existed on both sides, republicans have been far more adept at presenting, developing and promoting it. Republicans have also successfully extrapolated from local concerns and cultural production to international connections, while still maintaining and fostering that local core and its music. Loyalist music and related cultural practices have not made the leap from those local confines, with the exception of central Scotland, which naturally limited the reach of its prisoner-related campaigns.

One factor that must be accounted for in the asymmetry suggested by this research is that republicans have produced and been the subject of a larger range of sources, particularly memoirs and biographies, than loyalists. This could artificially contribute to the impression that music was less significant for the latter when in fact it is just less explored. Nevertheless, the cultural memorabilia and ephemera, audiovisual sources, primary and secondary source material examined does indicate that music was part of the loyalist prisoner experience, just not given the same significance as by republicans. There appears to be a more fundamental difference in terms of the importance of prisoner-related music for the respective movements. This can be attributed

to two related phenomena: differences in the nature of the movements; and differences in the organisation and presentation of the movements.

At the onset of violence in the mid-to-late 1960s, republicanism had a well-established focus on the issue of imprisonment, a comparatively concerted body of song, and a framework for fundraising and other prisoner-related cultural activity, influenced by the experience of the relatively recent IRA border campaign. Loyalism, in contrast, had neither the ideological nor practical infrastructure related to imprisonment, and was thus at a disadvantage. Its diffuse musical canon, encompassing Orange influences, country and western, local youth subcultures and a thematic focus on the First World War, reflected competing and even confused sources of identity and authority which would hinder the reach of both its ideology and cultural expression.

In contrast, republicanism presents a simple narrative of oppressor and oppressed, coloniser and colonised, which is not only apt for balladry but can also be translated easily into the dynamics of politically-motivated imprisonment and myriad other global movements. It is thus not surprising that republican prisoners would draw upon and also contribute to this canon, and that a broader network of sympathisers identified and fostered connections based upon a similar understanding of those dynamics, transmitted and reinforced through music. Loyalism is a more complex and unusual phenomenon, and far harder to separate from its local context and transpose onto a broader ideological network. Other factors, including the comparative lack of an organised diaspora, and unease towards, if not outright rejection of, loyalist paramilitarism from other sources of unionist and British authority, drastically limited the broader connections that could be made. This in turn hindered the “feedback” process in which music related to

prisoners on the outside world reciprocally strengthened the importance of its use to prisoners, and vice versa.

These factors are connected to the very core of republicanism and loyalism and their respective goals. They are also inextricable from how those movements' constructed their own image and narrative. The republican movement has been highly successful in building, promoting and sustaining its cultural arm, in part due to its stronger historical foundations preceding the recent conflict. Key Sinn Féin figures such as Danny Morrison and Gerry Adams demonstrated a comparatively early awareness of the importance of public image, and of the benefits of robust, appealing and well-resourced cultural events to that image. This means far more active attention has been paid to cultivating the trope that music and related practices are integral to republican political activity, identity and legitimacy, not merely a by-product. Splits and dissent notwithstanding, republicanism from the early years of the conflict up to the present day has been dominated by the Provisional movement and latterly Sinn Féin and the Adams leadership within it. Not only did Adams' strand of republicanism generate and value cultural production early on, but that tendency maintained a long-term position of power and influence. This facilitated unusually streamlined and comprehensive development of political positioning via cultural production. Loyalism, in both its wider and prison-based forms, has been comparatively fragmented and reactive. It had neither the foundations nor long-term concentration of power that would have made such concerted cultural mobilisation possible. Emotional investment in the prisoner issue and political music by republican communities and wider sympathisers, combined with the expert harnessing, organisation and propagation of those sensibilities by a tightly-run political machine, intertwined music far more closely with identity and authority for republican prisoners and the networks it built around them.

Further research.

These conclusions provide new insight into the interaction between two significant features of the Northern Irish conflict, that is, political imprisonment and musical expression. The issue of politically-motivated prisoners and events at Long Kesh/ Maze were a potent force in the conflict, and at times its key battleground. Additional understanding of how prisoners experienced and utilised their incarceration, and how its importance was conveyed to and understood by their wider communities, is therefore valuable to the wider study of this period. Relatively recent publications on life in Long Kesh/ Maze such as Whalen on republican songs, Mac Ionnractaigh on the Irish language, Rolston on murals and Rolston and McKeown on emotions, solidarity and masculinity indicate a growing focus on cultural practices and social behaviours in that context. This builds on an earlier body of texts more centred on the details of the prison protests, penal regime and paramilitary organisation. An exploration of music in various forms and by both sides is therefore a timely addition to that literature.

There are various possibilities for further research. I limited my focus almost entirely to Long Kesh/ Maze: this is where the majority of politically-motivated prisoners were held, and a unique penal context. As would be expected, this was also where most source material pointed to or originated from. Nevertheless, further research could be conducted into musical culture at the other sites used to house politically-motivated prisoners during this period: Crumlin Road/ Belfast, Magilligan, Maghaberry, the Maidstone prison ship and, most significantly, Armagh. Further investigation into the latter would also help address the gender imbalance of much coverage of the Northern Irish conflict in general, and its paramilitaries in particular. Beyond this, I did not address Northern Irish politically-motivated prisoners held in Great Britain or the

Republic of Ireland, with a few key exceptions. Any source material encountered relating to these sites was not wilfully excluded, but my primary focus has been on Long Kesh/ Maze, and to a lesser degree Armagh, meaning there is undoubtedly more material to be found and valuable insights to be gleaned from it.

I mostly limited the focus of Chapter Five to communities and organisations in Northern Ireland, and to a lesser extent the Republic of Ireland and Great Britain. This was in part material-driven, as the relevant collections of the Linen Hall Library and Archive of the Irish in Britain mostly originate in these countries. It was also representative of the fact that ties to and interactions with prisoners, along with paramilitary-related musical and wider cultural production, was strongest in Northern Ireland. Nevertheless, the ways in which these issues translated to wider diaspora communities, in particular in the United States, would be a worthwhile and interesting avenue to explore.

This thesis was limited by a focus on politically-motivated prisoners during the conflict, that is up until the majority had been released in 2000. There is significant scope for research into the cultural practices of former politically-motivated prisoners in the post-conflict period, building on some of the research into events, reunions and memorabilia referenced in Chapter Five. Northern Ireland has a range of active ex-prisoner groups, organisations, social spaces and even performers. Examination of the music and related culture of both loyalist and republican former prisoners, and those belonging to different paramilitaries within those categories, could provide insight into issues including social and economic support for these groups, legacy concerns and questions of so-called “dark tourism” related to the conflict.

More generally, this thesis deals with broader issues, including political music, commemoration and cultural identity rights that are still of huge significance to Northern Irish society and related diaspora communities. Disputes over a proposed Irish Language Act are a recurring issue in attempts to resurrect the Northern Ireland Executive. A level of violence unusual in recent years accompanied the July 2018 marching season in Belfast and Derry. Issues over commemorations of deaths and particular events in the conflict also arise with relative regularity, along with other legacy disputes such as the nature of victimhood. Constitutional issues regarding the relationship between the United Kingdom, Ireland and the European Union have also brought increased focus on cultural and national identity and the nature of "post-conflict" society. The approaching fiftieth anniversary of the outbreak of extreme violence in summer 2019, and the innumerable fiftieth anniversaries of atrocities, losses and other still-traumatic incidents to follow, does not at the time of writing seem likely to ease the tension around these issues, strengthening the need for and relevance of further research.

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The Loyalist Song Book

The Loyalist Song Book, 1987

The Loyalist Song Book 1690-1990: Tercentenary edition

The Orange Cross Book of Songs Poems and Verse

UDA Detainee Song Book

Assorted LPs and CDs.

Assorted literature from Northern Ireland Political Collection Ephemera boxes:

- Anti-Internment League
- H Block/ Hunger Strike 5
- Loyalism (General) 1
- Media: British Broadcasting Ban, Section 31, Media General
- Prisons 1
- Prisons 2
- Sinn Féin 1
- Sinn Féin 2
- Sinn Féin 4
- UDA Early 1970s

National Archives of the United Kingdom.

DEFE 23/108

DEFE 23/111

DEFE 13/1423

DO 130/125

Public Record Office of Northern Ireland.

NIO/10/7/15A

NIO/12/27A

NIO/12/39

NIO/12/122A

NIO/12/123

NIO/12/125A

NIO/12/130A

NIO/12/160A

NIO/12/276

NIO/12/343A

NIO/12/486A

NIO/12/545A

Statutes, parliamentary debates, reports and official publications.

HC Deb 17 April 1973 vol 855 cc275-392. 341

HC Deb 13 February 1975 vol 886 cc585-8

NIPD Deb 21 November 1934, vol 17, c72-73

NIPD Deb 3 November 1954, vol 38, p. 3073

Civil Authorities (Special Powers) Act (Northern Ireland), 1922. 12 & 13 Geo. V, c. 5

Disturbances in Northern Ireland: Report of the Commission appointed by the Governor of Northern Ireland, September 1969 (Cmd. 532)

Ireland v. United Kingdom, (5310/71) [1978] ECHR 1 (18 January 1978)

Offensive Behaviour at Football and Threatening Communications (Scotland) Act 2012o

Report of the Committee of Privy Counsellors appointed to consider authorised procedures for the interrogation of persons suspected of terrorism. Cmnd. 4901, March 1972.

Report of a Committee to consider, in the context of civil liberties and human rights, measures to deal with terrorism in Northern Ireland, 1975.

Report of an Inquiry by HM Chief Inspector of Prisons into the security arrangements at HM Prison, Maze, 26 January 1984.

Representation of the People Act 1981 c. 34

Broadcasting Authority Act, 1960 (31).

Audiovisual.

Shellshock Rock, 1979

The Enemy Within (Inside Long Kesh 1990), BBC

Danny Dyer's Deadliest Men, Bravo, 2008

Miscellaneous.

David Trimble Nobel Lecture (https://www.nobelprize.org/prizes/peace/1998/trimble/lecture/)

'Memorials', Police Service of Northern Ireland website (http://www.pst-ni.co.uk/memorials.htm)

'The Story', Your Man http://yourmanmusic.com/the_story.htm

Christy Moore website (https://www.christymoore.com/)

Sinn Féin Bookshop.

The Pensive Quill blog.

List of songs and albums.

12th Euphoria Platinum Collection (album)
14 Loyalist Songs (album)
18 Irish Rebel Songs (album)
A Loyalist Prisoner's Call
A Nation Once Again
A Night At the Opera (album)
A Whiter Shade of Pale
Aladdin Sane (album)
Alright Now
Alternative Ulster
Armagh
Babble (album)
Barbed Wire Love
Battle of Bombay Street
Behind the Wire
Big Yellow Taxi
Billy Boys
Bloody Sunday
Bobby's Anthem
Bohemian Rhapsody
Bold Robert Emmet
Boolavogue
Boys of the Old Brigade
Branded Man
Build my Gallows
Burning Bush (album)
Burntollet Bridge Ambush
Closing Sequence
Come All Ye Young Protestants
Come Out You Black and Tans
Croppies Lie Down
Dark Roses (Armagh Women)
Derry's Walls
Dolly's Brae
Each Dollar a Bullet
Enemies of Ulster
Fairytale of New York
Farewell to Bellaghy
For God and Ulster (album)
Four Green Fields
Galtee Mountain Boy
God Bless This Land
God Save the Queen
Gonna Make You a Star
Goodbye my Loyal Friend
Grace
Guns and Songs of the IRA Vol. 1 (album)
Gypsies, Tramps and Thieves
Hatful of Hollow (album)

The Imprisoned Volunteers
The Kerry Recruit
The Lid of me Granny's Bin (album)
The Luck of the Irish
The Man in the Black Soft Hat
The Men Behind the Wire
The Men Behind the Wire (Loyalist)
The Ould Orange Flute
The Patriot Game
The People's Own MP
The Protestant Boys
The Rising of the Moon
The S.A.M. Song
The Sash my Father Wore
The Sea Around Us
The Shankill
The Soldier's Song
The Time Has Come
The Wearing of the Green
The Wreck of the Edmund Fitzgerald
This is Free Belfast! Irish Rebel Songs of the Six Counties (album)
Tom Williams
Tommy Gun
Tone's Grave
Torn Between Two Lovers
Ulster Girl
Ultimate 12th Party Mix (album)
Up in the Armagh Prison
We Gotta Get Out of this Place
We Shall Overcome
We'll Fight in the Bogside
When Will I Be Famous
Wings' *Give Ireland Back to the Irish*
Wish You Were Here (album)
Women Together
Woodstock Tartans
You'll Never Beat the Irish
You're My Favourite Waste of Time
Zombie